

Universalism

Salvation beyond Death:

BEING SOME THOUGHTS OF A PARISH PRIEST
CONCERNING WHAT A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN MAY
HOPE AND PRAY ON BEHALF OF SUCH SOULS AS
DEPART APPARENTLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR
HEAVEN, NOR BAD ENOUGH FOR HELL.

BY

G. WINGFIELD HUNT, B.A.,

Vicar of Calderbrook, Lancs.

Author of "The Catholic Gospel," etc.

WITH A PREFACE BY

CYRIL BICKERSTETH, M.A.,

Of the Community of the Resurrection.



"We know absolutely nothing of the proportion of the
saved to the lost, or who will be lost: but this we do know,
that none will be lost who do not obstinately to the end, and
in the end, refuse GOD. None will be lost whom GOD can
save without destroying in them His own gift of Freewill."

E. B. Pusey, D.D.



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"PEACE, PERFECT PEACE."



TO THE
BELOVED AND PRECIOUS MEMORY
OF

JOHN MELVILLE GUILDING, PRIEST,
BORN OCTOBER 22ND, 1829, AT REST AUGUST 12TH, 1898,
FOR MANY YEARS VICAR OF S. LAURENCE, READING,
AS WHOSE COLLEAGUE IN THE SACRED PRIESTHOOD OF SOULS
THE AUTHOR SPENT SOME OF THE HAPPIEST YEARS
OF HIS MINISTRY,

HE WOULD REVERENTLY DEDICATE
THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO RE-STATE
THE GROUNDS OF CATHOLIC CHRISTENDOM'S
"SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE" ON BEHALF OF ALL
NOT REPROBATE, WHO HAVE PASSED
INTO THE SPIRIT-WORLD BEYOND.¹
IN THAT OTHER WORLD, THE AUTHOR DOUBTS NOT,
THE SWEET SOUL OF HIS DEPARTED UNCLE
IS BECOMING PURE, AS HIS LORD IS PURE,
AGAINST—IN GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE MERCY THROUGH CHRIST—
THE GLAD REUNION OF ALL FELLOW-LABOURERS,
"WHEN THE CHIEF SHEPHERD SHALL APPEAR."

"We may hear his voice no longer
Calling souls to meet the CHRIST,
Pleading for the sinful people
With the atoning Eucharist;
He is gone to meet his LORD,
In the joy of his reward."
G. Moultrie, 1875.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE
CUM OMNIBUS
NOSTRIS VICINIS ET AMICIS DEFUNCTIS.

PREFACE.

THE Author of this book is a busy parish priest, who makes no claim to original research, but he has thought much, and can write with clearness and force on the all-important subject of our life beyond the grave.

When he asked me to write a preface, I felt some hesitation about the title of the book, for I should not wish to associate myself with the view, that there is any hope held out in Holy Scripture of Salvation beyond the grave for those who wilfully refuse it here.

However, after reading carefully the whole book, without committing myself to entire agreement with every detail of the argument, I am satisfied that the Author does not intend to encourage any hopes which are not clearly warranted by Holy Scripture and the teaching of representative Theologians of the Catholic Church. Certainly the questions involved are those which touch the faith and practice of the Church very nearly. The strange delusion that the condition of the soul is absolutely fixed at death, and that there is no room for progress or purification in the Intermediate State, is both mischievous and false.

It involves either the eternal damnation of the vast majority of mankind, or the admission into heaven of those who are plainly without that "holiness without

which no man can see the LORD." The one alternative directly promotes unbelief, for faith in GOD becomes impossible, if it involves the attribution to the Almighty of an injustice against which the heart and mind cry out. The other involves a lowering of the moral standard, for if the imperfect and the sinful who cry for mercy at the last are cleansed and sanctified in a moment, before their breath leaves the body, or in the very act of dying, then the whole idea of a gradual process of sanctification, begun on earth and completed in Paradise, is lost.

I hope that the Calvinistic teaching, at which the Author aims many a trenchant blow, is dead or dying.

I believe that the publication of Dr. Farrar's famous *Sermons on Eternal Hope* largely helped to bring about a revolution in popular preaching. Some of us are grateful for that book, not because we entirely agree with Dr. Farrar's conclusions, but partly because he raised an effectual protest against the kind of preaching about hell which once was common—and partly because he drew from Dr. Pusey his invaluable treatise on *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment*.

But the danger of our own day is quite different. In the reaction against crude and impossible statements about hell, we are apt to ignore altogether the warnings of our LORD Himself about the consequences of sin, beyond the grave.

In his studies subsidiary to Butler, Mr. Gladstone uttered a very serious word of warning: "There is surely a side of the Divine teaching set forth in the

Scriptures, which shews that the Christian dispensation, when it fails in its grand purpose of operating as a savour of life unto life, will be a savour of death unto death ; and this under no new or arbitrary rule, but under the law, wide as the universe, that guilt deepens according to the knowledge with which it is incurred, and to the opportunities which it despises or neglects. Therefore the great Apostle of the grace of GOD sets before us this side of his teaching—‘ Knowing the terrors of the LORD we persuade men.’ Menace as well as promise, menace for those whom promise could not melt or move, formed an essential part of the provision for working out the redemption of the world.”

Mr. Gladstone examines carefully the only possible alternatives to the belief in eternal punishment, which are open to one who believes in responsibility and a future life. He shews a certain sympathy with and leaning towards the theory of conditional immortality, though he gives good reasons against it—but he reserves a much severer condemnation for Universalism. Protesting against the easy optimism which drugs the conscience by suggesting that all will come right at last, he adds : “ And those stern denunciations of Holy Scripture, which on a long course of trial have been found none too strong for their purpose, it is deliberately sought to relax by promising to every sinner, of whatever inveteracy, audacity, and hardness, an endless period of immunity from suffering ; after a period spent in it, which they have no means of defining, and which every

offender is left to retrench at his own pleasure, on his own behalf. What is this but to emasculate all the sanctions of religion, and to give wickedness, already under too feeble restraint, a new range of license ? ”

The Author of this book is constrained, by the results of a candid examination into the whole subject, as well as by his loyalty to the Creed of Christendom, to accept the old belief, that for the finally impenitent and unbelieving there remains, so far as we can tell, an eternal loss. He has been good enough to find room for the view to which I cling tenaciously, that eternal damnation does not involve, either for evil angels, or evil men, an eternal rebellion against GOD. (See note p. 140.)

CYRIL BICKERSTETH.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TO the weighty words contributed in his Preface to this humble Essay by his friend, Mr. Bickersteth, the Author need only add a word or two. The effort was originally suggested by the chance question of a brother Priest, who had read the last Sermon in the Author's published volume of *Plain Sermons* entitled, "The Gospel of the Larger Hope for the Departed," as to whether or not the subject might usefully be dealt with more fully on the same lines. The Author feels himself constrained to take this opportunity of most heartily thanking Mr. Bickersteth for his kindly interest in the matter, he having devoted many hours out of a very full life to examining the proof-sheets of this work. All Mr. Bickersteth's emendations and most valuable suggestions have been thankfully accepted and incorporated into the book. The Author's labour of love will be more than recompensed, if he may have, in any degree whatever, contributed to the dispersion of that very cloud of

ignorance and prejudice, which so generally prevails concerning what, according to Bible and Church, does and does not occur, upon the departure of a Soul into the Waiting World of the Beyond. He unhesitatingly withdraws in advance any statement, that conflicts with a complete and whole-hearted loyalty to "the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints," and, as such, received by the English branch of the Church Catholic.

G. W. H.

CALDERBROOK, S. JAMES,
ALL SOULS' DAY, A.D. 1900.

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Salvation beyond Death.



CHAPTER I.

WHOLESALE DAMNATION AT DEATH INCREDIBLE.

“**I** CAN never be a Christian—never! Why, think of it, man, how the matter stands on your own shewing. I say that your GOD is a perfect monster of injustice. Here is a fellow, who has been an unmitigated scamp all his life, repenting, as you call it, at the last gasp, and passing, *at once*, mind you, into glory everlasting. Here is another fellow, who has led a decent enough life, and done his duty by his neighbour pretty well, as things go, but who cannot stomach all the barbarisms of popular theology — who has actually, perhaps, been repelled from religion by the cant and narrowness of some unctuous hypocrite—this good fellow at the bottom hurled, the very moment he dies, into everlasting fires. *You* talk about people leading Christian lives—and, mind you, I yield to none in admiration of the Christian code of morality—but, sir, millions of folks don’t seem to me to have a ghost of a chance this side of the grave, whatever they may have afterwards. Born and bred in an atmosphere of vice, perhaps in a brothel, unable to respect their own mothers, the first sounds their baby ears can decipher being blasphemy—what we called

"smut" in our school days—and the Billingsgate of a drunken brawl; the companions of their childhood petty thieves, amateur sharpers, girls in their 'teens, who have lost all sense of modesty, if they ever had any—and, indeed, vice seems to me a very disease in some people's blood—of such unfortunates as these what in the world can you expect? You might as well talk Dutch to them as the language of the Sermon on the Mount! *All damned*, to judge by what you hear in the pulpit, with the exception of a handful rescued, by almost a miracle, from their disreputable surroundings. Every Ash Wednesday, I'm told—for I've stopped going to Church myself—a certain number of Christians meet together to say Amen to their damnation in advance. Your religion, of course, is an excellent thing for a select few, who have leisure enough and the disposition to cultivate character; but even the elect don't seem to me, if I am to believe the Bible, as it stands, to have a chance of heaven in the condition in which they die. Some splendid exceptions—my own mother, for instance—I grant you. Of course, I know well enough what you'll reply. GOD is merciful—all love. But, according to most people's reading of the Bible, GOD is also represented as inexorably just. There are such texts as 'Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' and, 'Work out *your own* salvation, with fear and trembling.' Why, what on earth is the meaning of the setting forth, broadcast through the New Testament, of the admittedly splendid discipline of Christian character? What, for example, can be the object of the Sermon on the Mount, and of all the impassioned exhortations of the Apostles to purity, temperance, brotherliness, charity, self-surrender in the cause of duty, if man has but to

'trust in the Precious Blood,' and so forth, *ad infinitum*? And all this, to say nothing of the millions upon millions of pagans outside of the covenant, I suppose, altogether—multitudes of them a sight better than Christians so-called, if we take the trouble to compare their lives. For the matter of that, I've heard it stated that the principal obstacle in the way of the Christianization of the natives of India is the spectacle of the dirty lives led by some of their Christian conquerors. On the whole, I'm inclined to say—speaking only for myself—that, in the first place, 'Salvation' is a poor thing, if it doesn't make better men and women of 'the saved;' and, in the second, that nine out of every ten of the race scarcely seem to me to possess even a moderately good prospect of salvation, though they live to the fourscore years, said, on the best of authorities, to be the limit of man's existence in this very matter of fact world of ours, which, if it has any real creed at all, appears to accept *con amore* the doctrine of the survival of the fittest."

Such, in effect, was the reply made to his parson recently by an educated Britisher of the prevailing type, when challenged as to his non-appearance on high days and holy days at his parish church. In his younger days this virtual sceptic, like others, had—to use a colloquialism—"sown his wild oats;" but now, having secured a competency after an active business career, he had retired, and settled down to lead the eminently respectable life of an English country gentleman. "No vice about him," his friends were in the habit of saying of him, "a thoroughly good sort; devoted husband, kind father, excellent landlord, honourable to a fault, and all that, you know. But without a particle of cant

in his composition. Respects the Church, supports the Vicar's charities, sends his womenfolk regularly to public worship, but cannot himself stomach the hell-fire fulminations against all and sundry of the parson's pulpit." Is *his* an isolated case, or are there, all over this England of ours, thousands upon thousands of thinking men and women, whose difficulty is *his* difficulty?

The present writer, indoctrinated as he was from his very childhood in the sternest tenets of the Calvinistic school, is bound to confess that, had his eyes not been opened, as he honestly believes, by the mercy of GOD, he should to-day have travelled far along the high road, that terminates in an almost total rejection of the Christian revelation, as previously interpreted to him. Some little while ago I was called upon to officiate at the funeral of a parishioner, whose death had been immediately caused by a fatal accident due to the fact, that at the time the deceased was beside himself owing to a prolonged bout of drunkenness. In accordance with northern custom, I attended at the house of mourning to say an office of prayer over the corpse, previous to its being carried out to burial. This duty performed, I ventured to express my condolence with the widow. I was positively *scared*—any milder word could not adequately express my feelings—by the woman exclaiming, in tones of absolute assurance, "It's all over wi' 'im now. The poor lad's i' heaven a singin' to the Lamb wi' Saints and Angels!" The last song the poor fellow had sung, before he fell into the condition of practical unconsciousness, that terminated in his almost instantaneous death, was some lewd, profane doggerel, unfit to be repeated. Five minutes, one minute, a second

afterwards, *upon the instant*—as if the mere fact of death had regenerated and sanctified him enough to company with glorified Apostles—he was held to be joining in the anthems of the Beatified upon the very steps of GOD'S High Throne! Was it credible? And yet who shall say that that poor soul was lost? In his last agony who knows but what the spirit in its flight cried out for mercy—cried out and was heard by a mercy, that can save to the uttermost? As Dr. Pusey¹ admirably expresses it, “Doubtless, the hour of death is an hour, when GOD is very busy with the soul, because it is its last. When the tongue can give no utterance of its hope in JESUS; when we have ceased to pray with it, as thinking it insensible; when human means are passed; when, perhaps, even friends have ceased to pray for it, as believing it to be gone; still, often, while it yet lingers, GOD is pleading with it, and works in it, what the Judgment Day alone will reveal.” Nevertheless, saved at the eleventh hour, a brand plucked from the burning, though that soul might be for what we know, can we imagine, in the teeth of Scripture, *his* being granted a place—and that *at once*—beside a Paul, whose impassioned reasoning, in the days of his flesh, “Of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” caused even a Felix to “tremble?”

You say, perhaps, that this is an extreme case. No doubt it is. But—

“Death is mighty *all around*;
On *every* home his shadows fall;
On *every* heart his mark is found.”

And death finds the most prepared of us unprepared in the full sense of preparedness. As the result of a fairly

¹ Sermon, *Life, the Preparation for Death.*

wide experience in several parts of England, I venture to think, that a belief in the immediate glorification of practically *all*, who depart this life, is not only prevalent amongst the uneducated masses, but is also inculcated from, perhaps, half the pulpits in the country.

Christians, to whatever communion they belong, would probably all agree in recognising the late Mr. Spurgeon as one of the saints and leaders of British Christianity ; still, with the New Testament in one's hand, one almost shuddered to read how, at the funeral of that great Baptist preacher, he was spoken of as " Our *ascended* brother ! " Against this disastrous theory of the instantaneous damnation or glorification of souls at the moment of death—disposing, as it does, of man's own accountability and his own responsibility before GOD—it is not surprising, that the thought of the thinker revolts. My humble venture is to endeavour to shew, that such a theory is inconsistent both with revelation and reason.

For you have no more right to ignore reason than revelation, in matters of religious belief. " There are," says that great ornament of the French Church, Bishop Dupanloup,¹ " two lights, two suns of the soul, faith and reason. Well, I say you must throw upon the truths, that you present to the faithful, the rays of those two lights : of faith, that there may be *obsequium*, submission of the mind to the Word of GOD ; and of reason, that this submission may be reasonable and enlightened, *rationabile obsequium*. The mind then sees, that it is to the Word of GOD that it is submitting, and it understands in that Word, in spite of its height and depth, all that is attainable by the reason."

¹ *The Ministry of Preaching*. Translated by Dr. Eales, p. 98.

The real fact is that, when it is asserted—sometimes with unnecessary heat—that the intellect of an age of advancing knowledge in every direction of research, is, to say the least of it, criticising somewhat severely the Christian revelation, it is too often not the faith itself, as revealed to the Catholic Church, and as understood and taught by her, but some popular, or local misconception of that faith, that is the object of scrutiny or attack. Misbelief is assuredly at the bottom of a large amount of the current disbelief, often taking up the unphilosophical attitude of “Nothingarianism.” Probably the best form apologetics can assume is simple re-statement of the truth, without note or comment. *Magna est veritas et praevalerebit.* Yes ; but it must be the truth, not a parody upon, a fraction of the truth, that must win its way. The truth, in its entirety, and with its proportions safeguarded, no doubt possesses boundless powers of recovery, whenever it has been anywhere docked or distorted almost beyond recognition. The mischief all along has been, that certain minds have fixed upon certain phases of the truth, which appealed irresistibly to themselves, to the, no doubt, unintentional disparagement of other phases of the same truth, no less vital, and without which there could never be any harmony of the several departments of the creed of Christendom.

In particular, I venture to think that a considerable amount of the difficulty experienced in our day by many, in accepting the faith of the Gospel, arises from lack of insistence upon the foundation truth of the Incarnation of GOD, from its *human*, as well as Divine, side. The preaching in season and out of season of *The Precious Blood*, as the one sole topic of the pulpit—

the limitation, that is, of the whole manifestation of GOD'S love to sinners to the single fact, stupendous though it be, of the Atonement—has endangered the antecedent, and equally essential dogma of *The Word made Flesh*, which gives all its efficacy to the Sacrifice of the Cross. "I once," says the late Prebendary Sadler,¹ "had an interesting conversation with a great revival preacher of our Church. I asked him what place the Incarnation had in the matter of the present saving of a soul. He seemed to think that it had none. He was surprised at the question, and yet the Incarnation is the first thing in each of the four Gospels!" Ecclesiastical history in its earliest stages is practically the account of one long life and death struggle to maintain the truth of the Incarnation. This bulwark of the faith once shaken, the adversary of that date saw clearly enough, that the entire edifice would be imperilled. Nowadays, it is true, we do not for the most part dispute, but we ignore that all-important verity. Surely this is a pitiful mistake ; surely, the superstructure must be insecure, if the foundations be undermined. *Such* a dogma cannot be without significance.

For think what the Incarnation of GOD really implies. In Adam, man—so far as he himself was concerned—was irretrievably, utterly lost. Human nature was demoralized by the Fall ; in fact, incapacitated for the attainment of its everlasting destiny. In this extremity GOD became Man ; incorporated the Manhood with the Godhead. As S. Augustine² puts it, "He continued to be what He was, but He became what He had not been." By the stupendous fact of the Incarnation was

¹ *Church Doctrine Bible Truth*, p. 39. Footnote.

² Sermons, *In Natali Domini*.

imparted to mankind a transcendent power of recovery, provided always, of course—as was the case subsequently —“a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world” was made by the death of the Cross; that is to say, man was restored *ipso facto* to a right relationship with his offended Maker, was “accepted in the Beloved,” and set free with “the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD.” But, provided *also*, that man, having been reconciled to the FATHER, had set before his eyes the Perfect Exemplar of an immaculate life, once actually lived upon earth in this flesh; and, further still, was endowed with power from on high to enable him to copy that sublime pattern, by virtue of the gift of the Indwelling Spirit of Sanctification. The starting-point, however, of GOD’S great salvation is the Incarnation of and by itself. All the rest turns, as upon a pivot, upon this central and overwhelming manifestation of Divine interest on humanity’s behalf. Indeed, of so much significance “for us men, and for our salvation,” is the fact of the Incarnation *per se*, that it has been, I believe, seriously and widely contended that, had man never fallen at all, the Incarnation would have taken place, in order to the attainment of even unfallen man’s complete development. It follows, therefore, surely that GOD could never have intended to ignore humanity’s *own part* in its own restoration. “For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.” There was in our nature, however fallen, a something worth preservation, even at the cost of so tremendous a condescension as that of the Birth at Bethlehem; a something, for the sake of the worthiness of GOD’S dear SON, worth final coronation.

In proportion to the intensity of conviction with which a man clings to his faith in the possibilities of humanity thus adopted into the Godhead, he will the more fearlessly put to himself the question, with which this little essay attempts to deal, the question, namely, "Are some souls saved beyond the grave and gate of death?" Granted the worst that can be said about the universal depravity of the race, are we prepared to say, —nay, do the Church and the Bible say—that all that the immeasurable love of GOD can do for the souls He has made, redeemed, desires to sanctify, terminates automatically, for weal or woe, at the physical crisis in the eternal career of a man or woman, which we call death? Is the Divine love, antecedent to all worlds, exhausted in the space of fourscore years at the most? Is death the one and only insuperable obstacle to the otherwise apparently universal operation of the law of progress? Taking into consideration their whole terrestrial environment, may there not be in millions, passed and passing the veil of sense, a spark of grace but just ignited, never fanned upon earth into a flame, that, in healthier, brighter surroundings, might kindle into pure light? Take England alone. Think of the masses of our overgrown populations. What a mere fraction of the vast sum total even come within range of the disastrously divided forces of Christianity at work amongst us. Is it not pathetic beyond words to read, in books of statistics and the like, statements that such and such a town, or such and such a parish, comprises so many thousands of *souls*? Yes, *souls* still; these sheep without a shepherd, these multitudes "without GOD in the world," and yet not altogether without the makings of character! Think of the minority, who *do* come

under the influence of religious teachers of some description or other, hundreds, aye, thousands of them, on fire indeed with love for souls, and yet, for all that, imparting to their disciples but fragments, if not grotesque distortions, of the Christian revelation. "The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the FATHER), full of grace and truth." The narrow, irrational, maimed conceptions, that emanate from scores of our pulpits—oftentimes rendered all but repulsive by reason of the hideous fanaticisms of their exponents—can we contemplate *them* with equanimity as interpretations of, or deductions from, a Gospel like that of the Beloved Apostle? Is no further illumination than such an intellectual, moral, and spiritual twilight requisite for immortal spirits, whose destiny it is, in the Hereafter, to explore the wide fields of infinite knowledge, to breathe, for an eternity of being, an atmosphere of infinite purity? Is it the great, white CHRIST Himself that some souls reject upon earth—and rejection of the CHRIST spells perdition, if anything does—or is it—what shall I say?—the bepainted mummy of the fictitious hero of a romance, long since buried? I *must* see Him alive, as He stands revealed in the clear sunlight of His own self-manifestation—see Him thus, and *then*, if I dare, reject Him, before He will reject me. I can recollect singing in my younger days, with a grim sense of satisfaction, the following words, now, thank GOD, eliminated from the pages of a popular Church hymnal :—

"As the tree falls, so shall it lie;
As the man lives, so shall he die;
As the man dies, such must he be
All through the days of eternity."

To-day, I dare not sing that verse, without fearing lest I be blaspheming a GOD, whose Name is Love.

But, in adventuring upon the discussion of a possibility of recovery for souls after death, one is, of course, met at the outset with the almost frantic opposition of the teachers and disciples of the system of theology generally received in England, who regard with something like panic any tendency in the direction of what they regard as distinctively "Romish error." But, after all, there have been men and women, Protestant to the bones and marrow, since the Reformation, who have been compelled to admit, that, on this subject at any rate, the reaction against mediæval superstitions, about the peril of which there is no question, has been allowed to carry us dangerously too far. For instance, Dr. Johnson would, I presume, be generally recognised as a very typical Englishman, with very English habits of mind, yet Boswell records the following conversation between himself and that famous worthy. Boswell enquires, "What do you think, sir, of Purgatory, as believed by the Roman Catholics?" Johnson replies, "Why, sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of blessed spirits, and, therefore, that GOD is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, sir, there is nothing unreasonable in this." Boswell thereupon persists, "But, then, sir, their Masses for the dead?" To this Johnson makes answer, "Why, sir, if it be once established that there are souls in Purgatory, it is as proper to pray for *them* as for our brethren of mankind,

who are yet in this life." It will, however, be one of my endeavours to prove that a belief in the chance of salvation after death for some souls need not, and, in fact, does not imply any assent to the Papal theory of a *penal* purgatory. But at the present moment I merely quote Dr. Johnson as a noteworthy example of a cultivated British Protestant, whom the natural prejudice of his race against anything savouring of "Popery" could not blind to the credibility of a purification of souls between death and the judgment. Before leaving Dr. Johnson, let me venture to emphasize his words, "the *generality* of mankind." For it is not a case of *some few* isolated individuals, whom GOD might be supposed to deal leniently with, owing to their exceptional circumstances. On the contrary, it is *the great mass* of men and women, who, when they depart this life, are not apparently good enough for heaven, or bad enough for hell.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" I know there are persons who would object to such an enquiry as the present, on the ground that we may safely leave to GOD Almighty the exercise of His own prerogative of mercy, where He will. Thank GOD Himself, we may! But seeing that He has been pleased to endow our race with reason, and an, at any rate, elementary sense of justice; and seeing that, as a matter of fact, the prospect of the wholesale damnation of "the generality of mankind" is so intolerable, as to constitute ground to many for a rejection of the whole Christian revelation, it seems a manifest duty to endeavour to remove, if one may in any degree, at least any misconceptions which considerably aggravate the sense of uneasiness in such minds. The object of the writer is

not to speculate upon mysteries not revealed, but, in dutiful submission to what is taught by the Bible, as interpreted by our Holy Mother Church, to try to dispose of any artificial stumbling-blocks in the way of faith, which are the result of misunderstanding or misrepresentation of what is actually revealed.

“Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to man.”

Surely, this is a fact. Our introduction to the subject of discussion cannot, I think, more fitly close, than with the following words of the great French prelate, whom we have already quoted. “When,” says Bishop Dupanloup,¹ “we speak, we must always think of those poor, sick souls, who have a veil before their eyes, or whom some feeble obstacle arrests—a grain of sand, a mere trifle, a poor objection, but sufficient to disturb them, and from which they know not how to defend themselves ; often a word said to the point, an argument, a demonstration directed purposely to them, will suffice to raise the veil, to move out of the way the grain of sand, to dissipate the difficulty, and let the light penetrate to their souls.”

¹ *The Ministry of Preaching*, p. 97.

CHAPTER II.

DEATH NOT THE TERMINATION OF GOD'S WORK IN THE SOUL.

IS GOD'S love the only love not stronger than death? This is the question we shall first endeavour to answer. Do the Bible and the Church say, that all the resources of Divine charity available for the salvation of souls are exhausted at the occurrence of the physical change, called death? In fact, is death a crisis in the career of an immortal spirit, or is it the catastrophe of that career? Must I have death always before my eyes as my *terminus ad quem*, the goal of "the race that is set before us;" or may I still recite unchanged those precious words of my Eucharistic Creed, "I *look for* the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come?" In order to clear the ground for the elucidation of this crucial point, let us transcribe, and look at a few familiar texts of the Bible :—

"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." (*Jerem. xxxi. 3.*)

"We love Him, because He first loved us." (1 *S. John iv. 19.*)

"GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us." (*Rom. v. 8.*)

"For GOD so loved *the world*, that He gave His only begotten SON, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For GOD sent not

His SON into the world to condemn *the world*; but that *the world* through Him might be saved." (*S. John* iii. 16, 17.)

"GOD was in CHRIST reconciling *the world* unto Himself." (2 *Cor.* v. 19.)

"The FATHER sent the SON to be the SAVIOUR of *the world*." (1 *S. John* iv. 14.)

"We have our hope set on the living GOD, Who is the SAVIOUR of *all men, specially of them that believe*." (Vulgate for last words has *Maxime fidelium*.) (1 *Tim.* iv. 10.)

"GOD our SAVIOUR, Who willeth that *all men* should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 *Tim.* ii. 4.)

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one *all things* in CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." (*Ephes.* i. 10.)

"That at the Name of JESUS *every* knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] *under the earth*—(margin R.V. 'Of the world below.' Vulgate has *infernorum*)—and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER." (*Phil.* ii. 10, 11.)

What do such texts as the above imply? Certainly (1) that GOD'S love was "before all worlds," antecedent to any deserving on man's part or qualification to respond to it. That (2) this great love of GOD manifested itself in the salvation wrought by CHRIST. That (3) this salvation was not designed to include *a few* select souls in its scope, but was intended to embrace *the whole human family*—"all men," "*the world*." It was the redemption of a race, not of a sect.

On the other hand, it is remarkable how incessantly

attempts have been made, and even now are being made, to narrow down to a minimum the extent of GOD'S great salvation. "Depart from me, for I am holier than thou!"—this is written broadcast upon the pages of ecclesiastical history. The inception of every separation from the main body of historic Christianity has been marred by the ebullition somewhere of a spirit of Pharisaism. I recollect, with a shudder, how my own early education led me to regard the millions upon millions of Roman Catholic Christians as outside of the covenant, a desperate case indeed, and, if saved at all, saved only by a special miracle. Indeed, so accustomed have we become to limiting the compassion of the Incarnation to those who fall in with certain lines of thought, that I fancy it is oftentimes a revelation to remind men, that it was and is mankind as a whole, that was and is the object of the condescension of the World's Redeemer. Let us, then, from the very outset of our enquiry, have this broad fact of the immensity of the love of GOD in CHRIST imprinted upon our memories. "Behold the Lamb of GOD, Which taketh away the sin of *the world*!" It is an insult, and, if an insult, seeing that JESUS is Who and What He is, also a profanity for us to erect barriers of our own devising against the possibilities of such a Mission, undertaken by such a Person.

Now see what follows. In accordance with the boundlessness of the love, that prompted the Incarnation, when it comes to the establishment of a human agency for the evangelization of mankind, the terms of the commission run, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of *all the nations*, baptizing them into the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST." One has

read how, when, in his hearing, somebody or other disputed the practicability of the work of foreign missions on such a scale, the stern old Iron Duke replied, "You have your marching orders!" Nothing less than "*all the nations*" is the object of the ministry delegated by our LORD Himself primarily to the Twelve Apostles. "In the Name of JESUS *every* knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things *under the earth*." I take it absolutely and literally, that each and every soul, into which GOD has ever, or shall ever breathe the breath of life, shall have his or her opportunity of accepting or rejecting the offer of salvation, that offer being made to him or her so fully and so intelligibly, as to render its rejection *a crime against his or her own soul*. I love to think with Faber :—

"It is God : His love looks mighty,
But is mightier than it seems ;
'Tis our FATHER : and His fondness
Goes far out beyond our dreams.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea ;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

"There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven ;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

"There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this ;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper house of bliss.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind ;
And the Heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

" But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own ;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own."

The conviction that every man, *quâ* man, and every woman, *quâ* woman, by virtue of wearing the same humanity that CHRIST wears, must somewhere, at some time or other, have the chance of salvation in Him, is to me the *Magna Charta* of Christendom, without which Christianity tends to become the shibboleth of a petty sect, instead of the creed of a Catholic religion.

But, now, what are the actual facts ? The Gospel has *not* been preached to "all the nations ;" and, so far as we can judge, there is no present prospect this side the grave of the evangelization of mankind as a whole. Think how many out of every thousand of the human family, after nineteen centuries of the Christian era, have even heard of CHRIST. I have extracted the following statistics, which I assume to be fairly correct, from a magazine¹ which happened to fall into my hands the other day. The figures represent the growth of Christianity, reckoned by centuries :—

Close of first century	.	.	500,000	Christians.
" second	"	.	2,000,000	"
" third	"	.	5,000,000	"
" fourth	"	.	10,000,000	"
" fifth	"	.	15,000,000	"
" tenth	"	.	50,000,000	"
" fourteenth	"	.	80,000,000	"
" fifteen	"	.	100,000,000	"
" seventeenth,	.	.	155,000,000	"
" eighteenth	"	.	200,000,000	"
Present time	.	.	400,000,000	"

¹ *The Home Magazine*, Feb. 17th, 1900.

Now set side by side with the 400 million Christians of the present day a recent estimate, partly based on Chinese official data for the year 1882, which gives the population of China Proper alone at 382,978,840 souls! So that the sum total of Christians to-day but about equals the sum total of the population of *one* non-Christian Empire. Yet we have our LORD'S assurance that, before the end comes, "The Gospel must first be preached unto *all the nations*." (*S. Matt.* xiii. 10.) Now I believe it is roughly estimated that 36 millions of people die every year. Reckon, now, what this annual death-roll amounts to, say, in a thousand years; what a mere handful, comparatively speaking, of those myriads of men, women, and children can possibly have heard, before they died, the good news, that angels' voices heralded one starry night amongst the sheepfolds of remote Bethlehem! Still, the GOD in Whom we hope, is "the SAVIOUR of *all* men, specially"—only "specially"—"of them that believe," here and now. I am driven, then, perforce, to conclude, that there is a Gospel of the dead, and that the mission of the Church extends beyond the frontiers of Time.

We have, however, only faced half the difficulty that has to be faced. Think, again, of what mere fragments and distortions, aye, even caricatures of Christianity have been, and are still preached to millions of the minority, that *have* learnt to name the Name of CHRIST. Look at this England of ours alone. Not so very long ago—almost within living memory—this was pretty much the aspect of things ecclesiastical. The population was increasing by leaps and bounds, and, meanwhile, from nearly every pulpit in the country were fulminated the naked, unvarnished horrors of the Calvinistic system.

according to which GOD deliberately created the vast majority of souls, with no possible prospect before them but an everlasting hell of material fire, described in advance in the most blood-curdling, heartrending language to its utterly helpless victims. Recall, if you dare contemplate the woeful spectacle, the ghastly story of the ecclesiastical lethargy of the Georgian era, with its bepewed, unsightly temples of Calvinism, "the daily sacrifice taken away," and the Sacraments all but gone out of use. Even now that, in the good providence of GOD, we have seen with our eyes, and "have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us," the wonderful renewal of her strength by the English Church—reflected also, thank GOD, in the communions outside her borders—which originated in turn in the Evangelical and Catholic revivals—even now look at the leeway, that has to be made up. Is it possible for the Gospel to be preached effectually by a mere handful of clergy and Nonconformist ministers in the midst of the teeming populations of our overgrown towns and cities? Pertinently enough, even S. Paul demands, "How then shall they call on Him, in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him, of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" I am much afraid that in many villages the state of things is not much better than in the towns. Indeed, it is idle to deny that the great mass of the English people stand, for all practical purposes, outside of any *direct* influence of the religious agencies at work in our midst. There is, of course, also the additional factor to be reckoned with of "our unhappy divisions." Four, five, or even more competitive places of worship

and Sunday Schools to serve a population, that cannot possibly require more than one Church and one Chapel to meet all its conceivable needs. What waste of energy, time, and money, sorely needed elsewhere, is entailed by such a pitiful state of things! Is sanctified common-sense a virtue, that has clean deserted us in England? Whilst we are quarrelling amongst ourselves about a ceremony, the enemy is inwardly chuckling to himself at our expense. No, not at *our* expense—at the expense of immortal souls scandalized, cut to the heart, repelled from a religion, which sets such a small value upon the souls, to whom it professes to deliver a message of everlasting moment. *Divide et impera!* The pagan conqueror of men had brains enough to accept and work upon this plan of campaign. Is Satan likely to be less sagacious than he?

Still, despite human failure, despite the irony of circumstance, the love, that "*willeth* that *all* men should be saved," burns evermore unquenchable, illimitable in the height of heaven above us, and our littlenesses, as the blue of the firmament still gleams behind the pall of earth-mists, that veil its radiance from our sight. In the teeth of facts, the commission remains unabridged, "Make disciples of *all the* nations." If, then, the Gospel, in all its fulness and all its power, is not preached to "all the nations" this side of the grave, either the terms of the apostolic commission from the lips of CHRIST were, to say the least of it, an exaggeration, or it must be presumed that there will be a further preaching of that Gospel in another state of existence sometime before the Judge of all the earth opens His grand assize. "For," witnesses S. Peter, "unto this end was *the Gospel preached even to [the] dead*, that they might be judged

according to men in the flesh, but live according to GOD in the spirit." But of this passage we shall speak in greater detail later on. In the meanwhile, we may say this much—Charity is the greatest of all Christian virtues, and charity "*hopeth all things.*"

But the moment one mentions the chance of GOD'S work for souls being extended beyond death, one is promptly pulled up by a reminder, that the Bible limits to this present life man's "Day of grace." Let it, then, be at once premised that I fully and freely assent to that proposition. Time is long enough to test character ; to decide once for all whether a man's whole attitude of mind and heart is, or is not, that of wilful and inveterate rebellion against the law of his Creator. How many of us, with the New Testament in our hands, would attempt to argue in favour of a *second* "place for repentance" being given after death to the finally and deliberately impenitent before death? For the moment, however, I do not press this point, because it will come up again almost immediately, and, indeed, will also form the subject of a separate chapter to itself. But, though *man's own* opportunity certainly terminates with death, I desire to emphasize the fact, that there appears to be absolutely nothing in the Bible to prove that GOD'S work for man automatically ceases at death ; that *He* does not further enlighten and sanctify after death the souls of such, as have not *consciously*, of set purpose, "trodden under foot the SON of GOD, and *done despite* unto the spirit of grace." *The will* is, of course, the seat of the man's individuality ; it is the ultimate "*Ego*" of the man. On the contrary, I am prepared to maintain that the New Testament, so far as it says anything concerning the state after death, encourages the hope,

that GOD'S grace *does* operate beyond the veil of sense in numerous cases—more numerous cases than is generally supposed.

For let us ask ourselves a question, which, perhaps, we have never fairly faced before. It is this. *What is there about death*, to judge by what we know of it, *that looks likely to terminate God's work in our souls?* It is manifest, of course, that no mere dissolution of our material body can possibly affect one way or another the future activities of our purely spiritual entity, after it has once become disembodied. Matter can only influence spirit, so long as spirit resides in the domain of matter. That this is so is clearly proved by our LORD'S own solemn words of caution, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear *him*." All the time we remain in the flesh, death necessarily looms large and formidable upon our horizon; but that horizon is a very circumscribed horizon. Death represents a boundary-line to *us*, because we can see no further than death. On the other hand, GOD looks at everything from His own vast standpoint, the standpoint of Eternity. The *whole* career of each living soul, beginning in time and continued through Eternity, lies open to His sight. Standing on the plain, you may be only able to trace the narrow course of a river for the length of a few reaches, but climb a mountain, and you may pursue the ever widening procession of its swollen waters until it loses itself in the immensity of ocean. Consequently, let us observe how death is viewed in the pages of the New Testament. Invariably it is spoken

of as something that has been mastered, robbed of all its terrors, as "an enemy" indeed, but the last of a series of enemies "to be destroyed." Indeed, in one passage, S. Paul goes so far as to declare that CHRIST "hath *abolished* death." Death, since our LORD'S resurrection, is represented to be but an entrance into an intenser life. It is literally true, according to the New Testament, what we sing at Eastertide—

"JESUS lives! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal."

Or, as we chant every Sunday, "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." "The King of Terrors," we are accustomed to call death. Yes; because it is a severance of earthly ties, the tragedy of human existence; a ghastly change of seen and felt beauty into seen and felt corruption; the reduction of calculable force to impalpable impotency. But this, of course, is the description of death from *our* point of view; it is not the whole account of death. For the immortal part of the man, the essential "I," survives the physical crisis, and continues its existence, consciousness, and activity under altered circumstances. This is sufficiently demonstrated in the "parable" or "history"—whichever it may be—of Lazarus and Dives.

Shall we now endeavour to define what is meant by the death of our bodily organization? What is natural death? Probably we do not realize how difficult it is to discover a satisfactory reply to make to this question. Though it, like all others, is liable to objection, let us take the scientific answer given by Mr. Herbert Spencer. Death is the exact antithesis to life; and life, according

to Mr. Spencer¹ is "The definite combination or heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences." Or, as he expresses it elsewhere in a conciser form, life is "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations." Beside these definitions let us place the able explanation and illustration of them by Professor Drummond.² "The essential characteristic," he says, "of a living organism, according to these definitions, is that it is in vital connection with its general surroundings. A human being, for instance, is in direct contact with the earth and the air, with all surrounding things, with the warmth of the sun, with the music of the birds, with the countless influences and activities of nature and of his fellowmen. In biological language, he is said thus to be 'in correspondence with his environment.' He is, that is to say, in active and vital connection with them, influencing them possibly, but especially being influenced by them. Now it is in virtue of this correspondence that he is entitled to be called alive. So long as he is in correspondence with any given point of his environment he lives. To keep up this correspondence is to keep up life. If his environment changes, he must instantly adjust himself to the change. And he continues living, only so long as he succeeds in adjusting himself to the 'simultaneous and successive changes in his environment,' as these occur.

. . . . But if from any cause he fails to adjust himself to the altered circumstances, his body is thrown out of correspondence with his environment, his 'internal

¹ *Principles of Biology*, vol. 1, p. 74.

² *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, pp. 147, 148.

relations' are no longer adjusted to his 'external relations,' and his life must cease."

Death, then, that is to say physical death, is the falling out of correspondence with the earth-environment. It is this, and nothing more; a departure out of one condition of being into another, which presents to the escaped soul an entirely new environment, with which to begin to correspond. Physical death, therefore, necessarily terminates the period of man's probation. For temptation must cease, so soon as the spirit is removed from the sphere of the influence of the forces that seduce into sin, "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" which three incentives to evil, adds S. John, are of "the world,"—the *cosmos*, S. John's own pregnant word, signify the present settled order of circumstance—which "world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Or, to put it in the language familiar to us in the Church Catechism, the discipline of character in the earth-existence is renunciation of "the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." Now, at death, "the flesh" is put off; "the world" is left behind; and, concerning Satan, it is expressly revealed, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath *but a short time*." At death, the adversary-in-chief's opportunity to deceive is overpast. It is of the conflict entailed upon him by correspondence with his earth-environment that S. Paul's speaks in such burning language as this, "I delight in the law of GOD *after the inner man*"—here is the voice of the "*Ego*" of the apostle, *his will*—"but I see another law *in my members*, warring against the law

of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ? ” This life present, then, manifestly must be the limit of our probation, being the period put to our correspondence with the earth-environment ; at death, the everlasting essence of the man, separated from “ the body of humiliation,” will have been in all cases sufficiently tested to determine whether, at the bottom, its entire bent is towards darkness or light ; whether, on the whole, it has made for the things of CHRIST or the things of Belial. “ Yes,” truly says Lytton, “ this life is the war of the false and the true ! ” It is impossible to conceive of a second probation in a condition of being after death, in which the world, the flesh, and the devil—circumstance, carnality, and Satanic craft—can have no place. But who shall say that the soul of our soul, having been sifted to its depths in time, ceases at death to advance in knowledge, purity, and power ? “ The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth *more and more unto the perfect day.* ” “ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER, Which is in heaven, is perfect.” No less than perfection is CHRIST’S standard for us. But who has found perfection this side of the grave ? Yet, surely—

“ Progress is
The law of life !—man is not Man yet.”

Surely, *unless the contrary is proved to demonstration*, we must believe this true of the liberated spirit, as constituting the very law of its being—

“ All things must change
To something new, to something strange ;
Nothing that is, can pause or stay.”

Either the spirit dies with the death of the body, or, being alive, must be subject to the universal law of progress, which law is, that wherever there is life, that life must be an *advancing* life.

I say that this must be so, *unless the contrary be proved to demonstration*. What, then, is alleged by those, who would limit the work of salvation to the earthly life? The stock argument, I suppose, is the quotation of the two texts from Ecclesiastes, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (xi. 3); and, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (ix. 10.) But these are the words of a man who lived centuries before the Christian era, and it is well known how inadequate were the ideas of the contemporaries of the Preacher concerning the state after death. Surely there is a progression of Divine revelation, and we should all shrink from forming a decided opinion about a vital subject like this, on the strength merely of two chance statements of an Old Testament writer. But, it is urged, we have texts in the New Testament to the same effect. Now which be they? "The night cometh, when no man can work." (*S. John* ix. 4.) But these words are applied immediately to our LORD'S own work. 'The day' was the period put to His own special mission in the flesh. In fairness, *the whole* should be quoted. Here it is. "*I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" This work committed by the FATHER to the SON is spoken of directly by Him as "finished" at the termination of His earthly ministry. "I have glorified Thee on the

earth : I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." (S. *John* xvii. 4.) Then again this text is produced against us. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST : that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 *Cor.* v. 10.) But this place of Holy Scripture is quite beside the mark. It is freely admitted that life is the limit of our probation, and that, so far as *our* work is concerned, the sentence is fixed at death, not to be revised afterwards. Pretty much the same remarks apply to the quotation by S. Paul of Isaiah's words, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee : behold, *now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." (2 *Cor.* vi. 2.) *Our* crisis of decision, of course, must occur in this life : here and now each of *us*, Christians, must make his or her own irrevocable choice. If we *reject* proffered salvation here and now, it is not contended that we are going to have a second chance after death. But it must be noted, that the exhortation of the Apostle, addressed to converts in full communion with the Church, refers to man's responsibility consequent *upon his having received the grace of God* as a definite past fact : whereas millions upon millions have never, or can never, this side of the grave, find themselves in a position, with *all* the facts before them, to arrive at the decision, at which the Corinthians in question were qualified and called upon to arrive. For *them*, as for me, to turn their backs upon CHRIST would spell perdition.

On the other hand, let us remark that not the day of death, but "the day of the LORD," the second Advent, is regarded generally throughout the New Testament as

the terminus, on which the eye of faith is fixed, towards which the heart of love yearns, as for the morning. "It will be found on the whole," says Dr. Newman,¹ "that death is not the object put forward in Scripture for hope to rest upon, but the coming of CHRIST, as if the interval between death and His coming were by no means to be omitted in the process of our preparation." So it is that, at the graveside of each of her dead, the Church pleads, "That we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our *perfect* consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory." Let us again transcribe a few texts from the New Testament, and look at them squarely.

"Let both grow together *until the harvest* . . . the harvest is *the end of the world*." (S. Matt. xiii. 30, 39.)

"Occupy (R.V., Trade ye herewith) *till I come*." (S. Luke xix. 13.)

"Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: but he that endureth *to the end* shall be saved." (S. Matt. x. 22.)

"A man, sojourning in another country . . . commanded also the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the LORD of the house cometh. . . . And what I say unto *you* I say unto *all*, Watch." (S. Mark xiii. 33-37.)

"But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *that day* (not death) come on you suddenly as a snare. . . . But watch ye at every season, making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all

¹ *Sermons*, vol. iii., Sermon xxv. Ed., 1875.

these things that shall come to pass, and *to stand before the Son of Man.*" (S. Luke xxi. 34-36.)

"Howbeit that which ye have, hold fast *till I come*. And he that overcometh, and he *that keepeth My works unto the end*, to him will I give authority over the nations." (Rev. ii. 25, 26.)

"He which testifieth these things saith, yea, I come quickly. Amen. Come, LORD JESUS." (Rev. xxii. 20.)

"Be patient therefore, brethren, *until the coming of the Lord.*" (S. James v. 7.)

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for, and earnestly desiring (or hastening), *the coming of the day of the Lord?*" (2 S. Peter iii. 11, 12.)

"And the GOD of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, *without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Thess. v. 23.)

"That thou keep the commandment without spot, without reproach, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 S. Tim. vi. 14.)

"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep (Greek = Guard), that which I have committed unto Him *against that day.*" (2 S. Tim. i. 12.)

"The LORD grant unto him (Onesiphorus), that he may find mercy of the LORD *in that day.*" (2 S. Tim. i. 18.)

"A crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me *at that day.*" (2 S. Tim. iv. 8.)

"Exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see *the day approaching.*" (Heb. x. 25.)

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the *flesh*, that the *spirit* may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. v. 5.)

"Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephes. iv. 30.)

"And the LORD direct your hearts into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST." (2 Thess. iii. 5.)

"But ye are come . . . to the *spirits* of just men made perfect." (Heb. xii. 23.)

With this compare carefully the following :—

"That they (the departed saints, 'of whom the world was not worthy'), without us should *not be made perfect*." (Heb. xi. 40.)

"Waiting for the revelation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be *unreproveable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*." (1 Cor. i. 7, 8.)

"Being *confident* of this very thing, that He, which hath begun a good work in you *will perform it* (R.V., 'Will perfect it.' The Greek verb is a compound form, the preposition prefixed signifying an addition.) *until the day of Jesus Christ*." (Philip. i. 6.)

These two last passages are important.

"That ye may be (Greek. Present tense. Perhaps = continue being), sincere and without offence *till the day of Christ*." (Philip. i. 10.)

The above quotations, amongst others that might be cited, are, I think, amply sufficient to demonstrate, that 'the day of the LORD,' and not the day of death, is regarded in the New Testament as the *terminus ad quem* for Christians, when the work of GOD'S salvation in them will be "perfected," and they themselves "unreproveable."

Here, perhaps, to avoid any misunderstanding, it would be as well to define what the writer understands by this great term 'salvation.' Is 'salvation' a mere plucking of souls out of hell fire, without any practical action on their own parts? Does 'salvation' begin and end with a conscious acceptance upon man's part of the proffer of pardon and peace in CHRIST JESUS? If so, as has already been asked, to what purpose were the moral maxims of the Sermon on the Mount uttered by our LORD, and put on record by His Evangelist? Where, in that case, is there room for such a declaration as that of S. Paul, a 'converted' man if ever there was one, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself *should be a castaway*." Paul, a castaway! Assuredly, if Paul had merely trusted to a conscious acceptance of CHRIST'S salvation, without efforts on his own part to obtain the mastery over his flesh. In fact, where, if we have but to cast ourselves upon 'The precious Blood,' do the office and work of the HOLY GHOST come in at all? "This Gospel," says one,¹ who certainly cannot be accused of any want of appreciation of the 'Evangelical system,' "of GOD'S love bearing our sins, is *of no use* to a man, unless it goes with another—that GOD bears him up for victory over temptation, and for attainment in holiness. It is said to be a thoroughly Mohammedan fashion, that when a believer is tempted past the common, he gives way, and slides into sin with the cry, 'GOD is merciful!' meaning that the Almighty

¹ The Book of Isaiah, vol. ii., p. 184, *The Expositors' Bible*, by George Adam Smith, M.A.

will not be too hard on this poor creature, who has held out so long. If this be Mohammedanism, there is a great deal of Mohammedanism in modern Christianity. It is a most perfidious distortion of GOD'S Will. *For this is the Will of God, even our sanctification*; and GOD never gives a man pardon, but to set him free for effort, and to constrain him for duty." Without entering upon the ancient controversy concerning Justification and Sanctification, it should be premised that the present writer understands by the term 'salvation,' that full and final redemption and renewal of fallen man, which can only be accomplished when he has actually been "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Seeing, then, that 'salvation,' in the complete sense of this great word, cannot be perfected even by the best of us this side of the grave, whilst the vast majority of men and women, at death, can scarcely be said to have even begun to "follow holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord*:" and seeing, further, that the New Testament fixes 'the day of the LORD,' and never once the day of death, as the date of the soul's realized salvation, one is inevitably driven to the conclusion, that GOD'S work in and for souls, which have been "tried to the uttermost" in this life's probation, is continued in the spirit-world, upon which man enters at that crisis in his eternal career which we call death. "To-day," promised the Master to the penitent thief by His side crucified, "shalt thou be with Me"—indeed 'with Me,' whither I go this day, but not yet in My heaven whither even I "am not yet ascended"—"in Paradise." Between that "to-day" and the "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom"

of thy petition must intervene a long, long period of waiting for thy soul—

“Not spilt like water on the ground,
Not wrapp'd in dreamless sleep profound.”

During that interval, in the felon pardoned on his cross, as in all other souls not reprobate, “the good work,” it may be but “begun” this side of the grave and gate of death, GOD “will perfect until the day of JESUS CHRIST.”

There is, I know, one important objection often urged, namely, that S. Paul expected the Second Advent to occur in his own lifetime, and so practically ignored any consideration of the intermediate state of purification and progress. But S. Paul must have been aware of his LORD'S emphatic assertion, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My FATHER only.” Whatever, therefore, the apostle of the Gentiles said or thought on the subject, he must have said or thought with this caution from the lips of of CHRIST Himself continually in his mind. At any rate, suppositions apart, we do know for certain, that, when called upon to state his deliberate judgment as to a current superstition that the Last Day was impending, S. Paul speaks decisively enough, as one who did *not* expect that greatest of events to be imminent. “Now, we beseech you, brethren,” he says to the Thessalonians, “by the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor *by letter as from us*, as that the day of CHRIST is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of

perdition." (2 *Thess.* ii. 1, 2, 3.) Here, surely, is a solemn enough warning against understanding *S. Paul himself* to say or *write* that "the day of CHRIST is at hand."¹

¹ On *Philippians* i. 6, cited above, Bishop Lightfoot remarks, "As 'the day of CHRIST' is thus a more appropriate limit than 'the day of your death,' it must not be hastily inferred from this expression that S. Paul confidently expected the LORD's Advent during the lifetime of his Philippian converts. On the other hand, some anticipation of its near approach seems to underlie 'until' here, as it is implied in S. Paul's language elsewhere, e.g., 1 *Thess.* iv. 17." With regard to this latter passage, Bishop Ellicott observes as follows: "*We, the living, who are remaining.* The deduction from these words that S. Paul 'himself expected to be alive.' . . . must fairly be pronounced more than doubtful. Without giving any undue latitude to '*We*' . . . or to '*Who are remaining*' . . . it seems just and correct to say that (the Greek participle) is simply and purely present, and that S. Paul is to be understood as classing himself with 'those who are being left' on earth (c.f. *Acts* ii. 47) without being conceived to imply that he had any precise or definite expectations as to his own case. At the time of writing these words he was one of the '*Living*' and the '*Remaining*,' and, as such, he distinguishes himself and them from those '*who sleep*,' and naturally identifies himself with the class to which he then belonged. It does not seem improper to admit that in their ignorance of the day of the LORD (*S. Mark* xiii. 32) the Apostles might have imagined that He, Who was coming, might come speedily; but it does seem over-hasty to ascribe to inspired men *definite* expectations proved since to be unfounded, when the context, calmly weighed and accurately interpreted, supplies no certain elements for such extreme deductions." I myself, speaking or writing to men and women of to-day concerning the general resurrection, should inevitably speak or write of myself and them as '*We who are alive and remain until the LORD's coming*,' seeing that *every* generation in turn has received CHRIST's command to '*watch*' for Him, Who '*cometh as a thief in the night*.' So long as life lasts for *us*, the Second Advent *may* occur during our lives; but because we spoke or wrote in this sense, as those who expected it daily and hourly, no future age would be justified in asserting positively that we, of this age, had definitely convinced ourselves that we should '*be alive and remain*' at the sounding of the Trump of Doom. At any rate, S. Paul warned the Thessalonians against listening to announcements of an impending '*day of CHRIST*;' and S. Peter, also cautioning *his* disciples against

The sensationalist of that age, who preached a Second Advent within sight, was, according to S. Paul, a deceiver. *Our* times, too, have seen many like deceivers. Fanaticism has very frequently in history appealed hysterically to supposed signs of instant doom where-with to fortify its various heterodoxies. Was S. Paul likely to have been amongst the very class of deceivers against whom he himself cautioned his converts?

'scoffers,' manifestly anticipated the possibility of a long delay before that crisis arrived. 'One day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The LORD is not slack concerning His promise. . . . but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'" (2 S. Pet. iii. 8, 9.)

CHAPTER III.

DEATH THE TERMINATION OF MAN'S PROBATION.

DO you really mean, then, to teach that there is a second chance offered to man of repentance beyond the grave? This is the next question that demands attention. Something has been already advanced on this subject, but more remains to be urged. No, we reply emphatically to the question put to us; probation necessarily terminates with the earth-life. Time is *man's* opportunity, and Time, for each one of us, ends with death, though this is not equivalent to denying that GOD "will perfect the good work He has begun in us until the day of JESUS CHRIST." GOD's love for "the world," which eventuated in the Incarnation, was antecedent to Time, and will also outlast Time.

"When heaven and earth were yet unmade,
When Time was yet unknown,
Thou, in Thy bliss and majesty,
Didst live—and *love* alone."

When, however, we say that Time is long enough to constitute an adequate probation for all men, it is evident that due consideration must be given to the dictum of our LORD—"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of them they will ask the more." As we cannot but doubt that there will be grades of glory in heaven—for instance, pre-eminence is promised by our LORD to the Apostles in such words as, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes

of Israel"—so, though "their perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul," is attainable by, at least, each and every Christian soul, we must perforce recognise, that the extent and intensity of the probation of separate individuals will accord with the dignity and precedence of the position, to which they are to be called in the Beatific Vision.

For we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that human achievement, though of and by itself utterly incapable of *meriting* acceptance with GOD for us, has a place in the final award. Here let me repeat what has already been emphasized. The taking of the manhood into the Godhead is proof positive that manhood possessed possibilities all its own, and possibilities that can be realized, when reinforced by union with Divine potentiality. Though we should feel probably inclined, many of us, to protest against many of his deductions from the fact, we are disposed to believe, that there is a great deal of truth in this statement of a great scholar and thinker of modern times. "And here," Archdeacon Wilson¹ says, "is a hopeful sign of progress in modern theology. No one can fail to notice that the Incarnation is assuming in theological preaching and teaching the place which not long ago was taken by the Atonement. The doctrine of the Incarnation is replacing the doctrine of the Atonement." The fact of the matter really is, that, in popular theology, the doctrine of the Atonement has been so pressed as practically to crowd out the doctrine of the Incarnation. The remedy is now, as always, to restore "the proportion of the faith." Man unquestionably has his responsibility for his own soul's salvation; he may not, without grave peril, limit 'salvation' to the conscious

¹ *The Gospel of the Atonement*. Hulsean Lectures, 1898-99, p. 88.

acceptance of redemption, by virtue of the vicarious blood-shedding of Another, even though that Other be GOD made flesh. It is an unmanly, an unwomanly system of religion, that which tends to make its adherents think or speak lightly of their manhood or their womanhood.

And man's opportunity, without a doubt, terminates with his natural life. We have already seen that Time is, for each of us, necessarily, by the very circumstances of the case, the sphere of probation; once the spirit is removed out of the range of temptation, *ipso facto*, a period is put to active conflict with sin. In the near prospect of his impending "departure," S. Paul is able to profess, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"—his probation of warfare is over. Nevertheless, "the crown of *righteousness*" shall not be given him until "*that day*." In the case of Paul, the saint and the evangelist, the Master's promise was to be fulfilled—"Whosoever shall do, and teach them (these least commandments), the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." But here follows the point, upon which we would now concentrate our attention. There are others, nay, the majority of men and women, so far as we can judge, who cannot conceivably lay any claim to the greatness in the hereafter, to which a Paul might aspire. What of *them*? For while from the New Testament it is evident that the very best of us are but "Accepted in the Beloved," that, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of GOD; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS"—while the vital truth

such texts express is the very keystone of the whole edifice of the Christian revelation, still, notwithstanding the fact that *no merit* attaches to our works *per se*, there can be no question that the judgment will be a judgment according to works, and not according to mere spiritual sensations. There can be no mistaking the drift of our LORD's own account of the Last Judgment recorded in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel. The benediction or the malediction depend there upon whether "Ye have *done* it," or, "Ye *did* it not." The sentence turns upon practical *deeds* of mercy. With this agrees the prophecy concerning the final assize upon almost the last page of the sacred canon—"I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before GOD; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to *their works*." In another passage of the Holy Gospel our LORD Himself also testifies, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His FATHER, with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to *his works*." To this S. Paul consents—notwithstanding his insistence upon the doctrine of justification by faith—in the words, "GOD, Who will render to every man according to *his deeds*; to them, who by patient continuance in well *doing*, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not *obey* the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that *doeth* evil." I repeat, then, what of *them*, the vast majority of men and women, who have not wrought the worthy gracious deeds, that entitle

a Paul to be "called great in the kingdom of heaven?" In this life they, too, must undergo their probation; they, too, must have had opportunities for deciding whether, each in his or her own degree, they will or will not "keep innocency, and do the thing that is right."

Just look at them, millions upon millions of them at any rate, in this country alone. Consider their environment, so narrow, if not so degraded, so antagonistic to the cultivation of Christian heroism. Consider their intellectual capacities, how little developed they are. Consider their moral standpoint, what very elementary ideas of virtue have been instilled into them; what sordid, if not vicious, examples are set them every day by the very persons they would naturally look up to as guides. Estimate, if you dare, side by side with your own, *their* spiritual opportunities. Why, everything about them tends to materialize them, to reduce them more or less to the condition of animals. No mother, perhaps, has taught *them* to lisp the prayer of innocency; for *them* there is not even a social tradition in favour of church-going. As a dignitary of our Church once expressed it to me, "So many of our people really have no *liturgical instincts*." *Their* homes know no even dusty Family Bible in an honoured place in the best parlour. Week in and week out there is the eternal struggle for bare existence; Sunday, if not a working day like all other days, is observed in *their* circles as but so many hours of relaxation from incessant toil; indeed, perhaps, when Sunday comes, they are literally too fagged out to care for anything but the indulgence of sheer indolence. Oftentimes they do not possess even energy enough to take Sunday excursions abroad, and so, at any rate, refresh themselves by inhaling a breath of fresh

air. In most parishes you may find whole families of such folk simply loafing about their houses all Sunday, perhaps only half dressed, and merely killing time in the utter idleness, which is the nearest possible approach to rest for their jaded bodies. Think even of their physical conditions. Born, as they are, of stunted, unhealthy parents, in uncongenial, perhaps squalid, surroundings, herded together in such numbers as to render them devoid of the ordinary decencies of life, their very bodily organization would appear incapable of any supreme effort to do and dare things worth the doing and daring. In the manufacturing districts, at any rate, their future mothers, when mere children, in the twelfth or thirteenth year of their age, are confined half or all the day in stuffy mills. How can you expect under these circumstances but that their offspring will be physically, aye, and morally, handicapped in too many instances? Yet these millions upon millions in such case, they, too, will be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. In this world it does not appear likely that in many instances such persons can ever even seriously contemplate the standards of duty a Paul set before himself, but do they not, hosts of them, time after time, put to the blush their fellows a thousand times as happily circumstanced? In this connection, I cannot refrain from quoting some heartening words from the pen of one of our most eloquent of orators and authors. "Let us, then," urges Dean Farrar,¹ "try to believe that there is a good side in every man. Often in the most hardened criminals the thought of home, the thought of a mother, the thought of innocent childhood, a flower which recalls the memory of a better past, a proof of

¹ *Social and Present Day Questions*, pp. 77, 78.

confidence, an unlooked-for kindness, will open the fountains of the great deep of purifying emotion, and restore the true attributes of a man. We sometimes read with amazement, how some one, who seemed to be past all remedy in abandoned vileness, suddenly touched by the glory of heroism, will rise to a great act of self-sacrifice. We read of some poor soldier, whom his general has rated for backwardness, who, bidden to charge, one against a thousand, 'Hurls his soiled life against the pikes and dies.' Look at the battle of Waterloo, look at the trenches of Sebastopol, look at the charge at Balaclava, look at the burning of the *Goliath*, look at the wreck of the *Birkenhead*, to see how the commonest and coarsest of men can recognise the claim and sovereignty of duty, even at the cost of life. The world is not wholly bad. Amid its sin, amid its want, amid its misery, there move everywhere the white-winged messengers of mercy. If you will believe in the natural goodness of men, and throw yourself upon it ; if you will appeal always to that spiritual faculty, which a man may waste and desecrate, but never quite destroy, you will find that man's nature has never lost all touch of its original brightness, nor seems less than an archangel ruined." Who, in the daylight of the sublime Creed of Christendom, "I believe in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Only-begotten SON of GOD, very GOD of very GOD, by Whom all things were made ; Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the HOLY GHOST of the Virgin Mary, and *was made Man*"—who, in the daylight of *such* a creed, is the infidel of infidels, a lost soul indeed, but the man or woman who despairs of humanity ?

"I heard a man proclaim—all men are wholly base ;
One such an one I knew there stood before my face !"

We speak that we do know, some of us clergy, when we protest that we have witnessed with our own eyes, in the very lowest grades of society, aye, amongst the too lightly styled outcast class, who never pray or open a Bible, or enter a church, acts of charity done to a poorer neighbour or a comrade in distress, which bespoke a very heroism of self-surrender. The last penny has been sacrificed for the purchase of some little luxury wherewith to soothe the heartache of direst poverty ; a long day's toil has been cheerfully succeeded by a longer night's vigil beside a bed of sickness, or perhaps of death. As one heard the tale of the doing of such a deed of mercy, the foul, fetid atmosphere of squalor or vice seemed to be sweetened for a moment by the fragrance of the lips of One, fairer than any of earth, Who breathed His absolution in the music of His benediction, "Ye have done it unto Me!" I thank GOD that the only account given by our LORD Himself of the Last Judgment makes it appear that the sentence turns upon practical deeds of charity: "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in ; naked, and ye clothed Me ; I was sick, and ye visited Me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of *the least* of these My brethren, ye have done it unto *Me*." These multitudes, who have never recited the Creed, but have practised something of the spirit of, a Paul, they may not indeed be able to attain to the greatness in the Hereafter of a Paul, but assuredly they will have been proved, they will have passed through a probation ; and in their cases, too, a

Paul would be "confident of this very thing that He, which began"—but "began," and nothing more—"a good work in them will perfect it until the day of JESUS CHRIST." A soul, capable of deeds, which would be-seem a hero or a martyr, what might it not become, if liberated from surroundings that defile, associates that seduce, a flesh that would drag spirit down to its own bestial level? And yet those evil surroundings, those godless companions, that grovelling flesh, are, each of them, necessary elements in a condition of trial, the object of which is to test, not what the soul knows or feels, not even primarily how it will act, but what it is essentially at the bottom—a conscious rebel against the light that is in it, however dim, or a fallen angel, not altogether apostate, but aware of his or her lost high state, and feeling, however blindly, after GOD in the darkness. It is recorded, I believe, in early ecclesiastical history, that martyrs, who died without having yet received Holy Baptism, were stated to have been baptized in their own blood, which baptism of fire was accepted as valid in place of the baptism of water. The patient endurance nowadays of what *some* of our brethren have to suffer, without losing all faith in a GOD of Mercy, without drifting into a state of moral perdition, in which conscience is finally silenced—this patient endurance, surely it is a lifelong martyrdom, and the blood-tears of this martyrdom may constitute the elements in a veritable sacrament of initiation into discipleship with the King of Grief.

Besides these millions outside of the direct influence of religious agencies, there are, of course, those whose spiritual education is defective this side of the grave, and who, therefore, when they die, cannot be thought to

be qualified for "inheritance with the saints in light," without some further enlightenment in the world of spirits. But they, too, in this life undergo their probation. And surely character is sifted to the bottom by the vocation to become greater than one's creed, as a member of a narrow sect, to grope in the twilight after the ideals of manhood and womanhood, which are clear as the daylight to us, who profess the Catholic faith of the world-wide Church of the Incarnation. But, in addition to these thus partially illuminated souls, there is that large and ever-enlarging class of men and women, who are repelled from acceptance of the Christian revelation by very real difficulties to them on the side of the intellect. Perhaps it would be safe to say that one-half of such rejections of the faith of the gospel are due to misconceptions as to what that faith really is. The extravagancies and exaggerations of fanaticism in any direction must prove a hindrance in the way of the profession of Christianity to many highly sensitive and refined minds amongst the educated and thinking classes. For ourselves, who, thank GOD, have never been assaulted by the subtler temptations that appeal to the reason instead of to the passions, it is difficult, perhaps, to realize *how acute* a trial to *some* may be the suggestion of a doubt concerning some article of the religious faith, whose tenets they have never been led so much as to question from their youth up, until the crisis came. Think of the shock to *some* souls, when, for the first time in their lives, the straight and leading question is put to them, "*How* can this be so, in the teeth of science, of experience, of reason?" The very foundations of their being may be shaken by that searching "*How?*" "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born

of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD." We can almost picture to ourselves the frightened, perhaps agonized, expression upon the face of Nicodemus, "A master of Israel," steeped in the sacred lore of his ancestral monotheism, as, upon the enunciation of the mystery of Regeneration, he demands, "*How can these things be?*" Think of the danger of a recoil from implicit, hitherto immovable, assurance into—what? Possibly, the restraints of traditional religious belief relaxed, the mind unbalanced, into moral catastrophe. May there not be found here one of the most crucial tests of the man, that can well be conceived of? While, on the one hand, we have all met sceptics, whose lives put to the blush the lives of even more than average Christians, men and women of unimpeachable integrity, who adorn the philosophies they prefer to the Christian revelation; on the other hand, we are sure that, in many instances, a greater or less degree of professed scepticism is traceable at the bottom to moral delinquency; that there exists in some quarters a nervous anxiety to escape the obligations of the admittedly high standard of discipline enforced by the gospel.

"For forms of faith, let graceless zealots fight;
He can't be wrong, *whose life is in the right.*"

When *some* folk, with a very superior sneer, quote such specious sentiments as this couplet somewhat censoriously conveys, one is sorely tempted to round upon them and reply, "Yes, we are thoroughly in accord with you in believing that character matters more than creed, since the object of creed is to produce character; but will your own walk and conversation bear examination?" One has read somewhere of a British officer in India, who had

been leading a notoriously unchaste life, and who on one occasion was arguing with the chaplain of his regiment on the subject of religious belief. In the course of the discussion, this officer remarked, "Religion is all very well, but you must admit there are difficulties—about the miracles, for instance." The chaplain, knowing his man, looked him straight in the face, and replied, "Yes, there *are some* things, I'll admit, in the Bible that are not very plain, but *the seventh commandment is very plain!*" The thrust, it is stated, went home with good effect. One instinctively mistrusts the scepticism which commences the attack upon dogma, by disputing in practice the cogency of the moral law. But, surely, we can and do hope that a man or woman, whose *character* stands the test of the unsettlement of his or her faith, may, in the life after death, when the veil of short-sightedness or prejudice is lifted, recover that faith, if, that is to say, it be admitted that character will survive in the ruin of all else.

Then there are, of course—passing over the millions of Pagans, concerning whom something will be said in a later chapter—the multitudes of men and women within the borders of Christendom, whom the Council of Florence in 1439 styled "the *middle* sort of souls," who have never reached any high standard of sainthood, and yet have never sunk to the abyss of the apostate. Who of us all but fondly recalls the memory of some dear one or other out of sight, but never out of mind, about whose ultimate salvation we cannot but cherish a hope, which, perhaps, we hardly dare express in words—somebody, perhaps, snatched away in a moment—whom we perforce regard as not good enough for heaven, but—GOD forgive us, if in adding the words, our love betrays us

into the utterance of a presumption—not bad enough for hell? Mediocrity has been the lifelong atmosphere such souls breathed; there have been none of the influences at work in *their* midst that enkindle mighty enthusiasms for the exercise of superlative virtue; at the same time there has been little or no hankering after the fleshpots of gross and grovelling vice. But they, too, must have undergone their probation during the earth-life. And, perhaps, it entails a sorer conflict than we imagine it to be, for men and women whose environment is altogether commonplace from cradle to grave, not to sink into a veritable slough of despond, not to become mere machines, not to allow themselves merely to drift with the stream, individual responsibility forgotten. For me to live through a whole life in the centre of a dead level of monotonous average, and, at its end, still to know myself a conscious separate “I,” an immortal spirit—this may constitute for me a veritable purgatory on earth of sifting to the bottom of my being. To continue to cling to and follow, “faithful unto death,” the real, living CHRIST, at however great a distance, must be difficult indeed for the soul, that perforce at times of depression complains in the language of Jean Ingelow:

“ My heart is all in ruins with pain, my feet
Tread a dry desert, where there is no way,
Nor water. I look back, and, deep through Time,
The old words come but faintly up the track,
Trod by the sons of men. The Man HE sent,
The Prince of Life, methinks I could have loved,
If I had looked once in His deep man's eyes.
But long ago He died, and long ago
Is gone.”

A few words must here be interposed with regard to an objection that may possibly be raised to the whole

argument of this chapter. The objection is this : What about the thirteenth article of religion, "Of works *before justification*"? On this point I content myself with quoting the words of probably the ablest of recent commentators on the Thirty-nine Articles. "It will be noted," says Dr. Gibson,¹ "that whereas *the title* speaks of works *before justification*, in *the body* of the article the phrase is not repeated, but a different one takes its place, '*Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit.*' The question, then, at once arises, are these two expressions strictly convertible terms? The answer to this must depend on the reply given to another question, Is grace ever given before justification? If *not*, the two expressions, 'works before justification,' and 'works before grace,' may be regarded as convertible : but, if it should appear that grace is sometimes given before justification, then it will be evident that *the title* of the article is too wide, and must be limited by the expression actually used in the article itself. The question as to the relation of grace to justification is one which must be decided strictly by the testimony of Holy Scripture, and it is believed that there is ample evidence to establish the fact that grace may be given before justification. As Bishop Bull² says, 'The truth is that *no work really good* can *precede* the grace of GOD, since without that grace it cannot be performed. But good works may precede justification, and actually do precede it ; for grace is given before justification, that we may perform those things by which we arrive at justification.' Again, it will scarcely be doubted

¹ *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, vol ii., pp. 415, 416, 417, 418.

² *Harmony of Justification*, p. 162.

that S. Paul received grace at the moment of his conversion. 'Behold, he prayeth,' was the message which came to Ananias (*Acts ix. 11*), and that prayer can only have been offered up and rendered acceptable by the action of the Holy Spirit upon his heart. But, strictly speaking, he was not *justified* for three days after his 'conversion;' for when Ananias came to him his words were these, 'And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins.*'" (*Acts xxii. 16*). A little farther on, Dr. Gibson explains, "There still exists in the Record Office a MS. copy of the Articles, signed by the six royal chaplains, to whom they were submitted before their final revision and publication, and in this we find that *in the Article itself* we have the expression, 'Opera quæ fiunt ante *justificationem*, cum ex fide JESU CHRISTI non prodeant,' etc. It is evident that Cranmer, and those working with him, afterwards felt that this was inaccurate, and therefore modified the wording of the article before publication, introducing the phrase, which we now read in it, 'Works before *the grace of Christ*,' etc., although *the old title* was still allowed to remain, inexact as it was." When I subscribed these articles, I certainly never intended to asseverate that GOD Almighty disapproved of, or even ignored, good works wrought by men and women outside the covenant of *formal* "justification." I am, however, absolutely at one with the language of the article in protesting against any idea that such good works "*deserve* grace of congruity." It has already been insisted upon in this chapter that no creature of GOD *merits* consideration at GOD'S hands by virtue of his deeds *per se*, apart from his being "accepted in the Beloved." As S. Augustine ¹

¹ *De Prædest. Sanctorum*, c. vii., quoted by Dr. Gibson.

well sums up the matter, "Whatever of good works Cornelius performed, as well *before* he believed in CHRIST, as when he believed, and after he had believed, are *all to be ascribed to God*."

"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required ; and to whom men have committed much, of them they will ask the more." Yes, life is every soul of man's period of probation to test what he *is* ; but surely it cannot be true that—

" As the man dies, such must he be
All through the days of eternity."

Beyond death may we not, with S. Paul, be "confident"—aye, more than merely hopeful, *confident*—that the good work "begun"—perhaps at death only in the very elementary stages of initiation—shall be perfected until the day of JESUS CHRIST? Enough that, in Time, the man has been proved as to not merely what he has done, said, attempted, thought, failed in, but as to what he *is* essentially, at his heart's heart—beyond the veil, in the clearer light of the paradise of pure spirit, liberated from the bondage of circumstance, from the domination of ubiquitous evil, the limitation of time and space overpast, surely the undying "*Ego*" of all the humanity not reprobate shall be refreshed, enlightened, sanctified. Surely we dare believe with Lord Houghton:—

" Yet it may be that the abyss
Of the lost is only this,
That for them all things to come
Are inanimate and dumb,
And Immortal Life they steep
In dishonourable sleep—
While no power of pause is given
To the Inheritors of Heaven ;

And the holiest still are those,
Who are farthest from repose,
And yet, onward, onward press
To a loftier godliness ;
Still becoming—more than being,
Apprehending—more than seeing,
Feeling, as from orb to orb
In their awful course they run,
How their souls new light absorb
From the Self-Existing One."

CHAPTER IV.

REPROBATION.

YOU are then a Universalist, it may be further objected. No, I reply, I am not. Though I would hope, to the widest and broadest possible capacity of hope, for my race, since Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation, and CHRIST claims to be the SAVIOUR of a world, not of a sect, I cannot read my Bible without being convinced that there is a hell of the lost—be it a place or a condition—and an everlasting damnation of reprobates and apostates. Only my strong and earnest protest is entered against the monstrous idea of GOD, not man himself, being made responsible for the perdition of souls, which He has made. “Yea, let GOD be found true, but every man a liar.” Just think what the following propositions imply. They are a selection from the “Lambeth Articles” of 1595, the imposition of which upon the Church of England, by the good providence of GOD, was averted owing to the commonsense of Queen Elizabeth. Were I in quest of a proof of the Divine mission of our mother, the English Church, I should discover it in the significant fact, that she has more than once narrowly, almost miraculously, escaped being forced into giving her formal and official assent to the crazes and extravagancies of various heretical cranks. Here are the Articles in question :—

1. “GOD from eternity hath predestinated some to life, some *He* hath predestinated to death.”

2. "The moving or efficient cause of predestination to life is not the provision of faith or of perseverance, or of good works, or of *anything which may be in the persons predestinated*, but only the will of the good pleasure of GOD."

3. "Of the predestinated there is a fore-limited and certain number, which can neither be diminished, *nor increased*."

4. "They, who are not predestinated to salvation, will be necessarily condemned on account of their sins."

7. "Saving grace is not given, is not communicated, is not granted to all men, *by which they might be saved, if they would*."

9. "It is not placed *in the will* or power of *every* man to be saved."

Read over carefully such statements as these, and ask yourself whether a GOD, concerning Whom such language might be employed, could be anything less than a moral monster, without a particle of justice in Him, to say nothing of any sentiment of mercy and loveliness. I, for one, could never pray to *such* a GOD. Indeed, where would be the need of prayer, supposing salvation depended upon a pitiless fatality? Such, however, was the doctrine promulgated, almost within living memory, from half the pulpits in England. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." There could be only one effect produced upon modern minds by the preaching to-day of such a Gospel of despair. "GOD our SAVIOUR, Who *willeth* that *all men* should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth." That is a better Gospel. Paul or Calvin—which of the two does the world's heart prefer to credit? A Hell of the lost there must needs be,

but it is *man's* Hell, not *God's* Hell. "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to *his own place*," the only place, to the environment of which a Judas could assimilate himself. "Judas fell:" it was the act of Judas himself, the crime against himself of a moral and spiritual, as well as physical suicide. GOD'S will for Judas was surely what it was for all other souls, namely, that he should have been saved. Pity Incarnate, with the sweat of blood standing like great beads upon His forehead, entreated His comrade Judas to become his better self again. With the kiss of perfidy burning upon His outraged lips, the SAVIOUR of Judas, as of all else, uttered no malediction, but pleaded, "As a man pleadeth for his neighbour," "Friend"—even thus and now "Friend"—"wherefore art *thou* come?"

I hardly feel myself competent, even if it were part of my purpose, to discuss at length the mysterious subject of predestination. We men and women are incapable of comprehending all that is epitomized for us in the tremendous term "eternal." This being so, it would seem impossible for finite intellects to solve the problem of the relation of Divine foreknowledge to human freedom. I merely, therefore, content myself with reproducing a few words on this subject from the pen of an authority¹ capable of dealing with it, so far as it can be dealt with by our limited understandings. "There are, we may say, two ideas commonly associated with predestination which S. Paul gives us no warrant for asserting. The one is the predestination of individuals to eternal loss or destruction. That GOD should create any single individual with the intention of eternally destroying or punishing him is a horrible idea,

¹ Gore. *S. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 64, 65.

and, without prying into mysteries, we may say boldly that there is no warrant for it in the Old or New Testament. GOD is indeed represented as predestinating men, like Jacob and Esau, to a higher or lower place in the order of the world or the Church. There are 'vessels' made by the Divine potter to purposes of 'honour' and 'vessels' made to purposes (comparatively) of 'dishonour' (*Rom. ix. 21*); there are more honourable and less honourable limbs of the body. (*1 Cor. xii. 22 ff.*) But this does not prejudice the eternal prospects of those who in this world held the less advantageous posts. With GOD is no respect of persons. Again, GOD is represented as predestinating men to moral hardness of heart, where such hardness is a judgment on previous wilfulness. Thus men may be predestined to temporary rejection of GOD, as in S. Paul's mind the majority of the contemporary Jews were. That was their judgment and their punishment. It was, however, not GOD'S first intention for them, nor His last. Those chapters of S. Paul (*Rom. ix.-xi*) which contains the most terrible things about the present reprobation of the Jews, contains also the most emphatic repudiation of the idea that moral reprobation was GOD'S first idea for them, or His last. 'The gifts and calling of GOD,' that is, His good gifts and calling, says S. Paul, speaking of the now 'reprobate' Jews, are 'without repentance.' (*Rom. xi. 29.*) GOD'S present reprobation of them is only a process towards a fresh opportunity, 'GOD hath shut up all into disobedience that He might have mercy upon all.' (*Rom. xi. 32.*) Men may baffle the original Divine purpose, and that, so far as their own blessedness is concerned, even finally; they may become finally reprobate; but the Divine purpose for them at its root

remains a purpose for good. 'GOD will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' (1 S. Tim. ii. 4.)

No! We, to whom the CHRIST is the SAVIOUR of a world, not of a sect, are no Universalists; we accept without questioning the awful fact of a hell for the finally impenitent, but we dare not, cannot lay the perdition of a single soul, into which He has Himself once breathed the breath of life, to the charge of the GOD Who has revealed Himself to us men in the face of JESUS CHRIST. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" No, for an instant would we dream of intruding upon the prerogative of Divine judgment, delegated even by GOD the FATHER to the SON. And why to the SON? Because surely, "He knew what was in man;" because He wears our humanity; because "He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him;" and, therefore, with HIS experience of mortal frailty and of the tyranny of circumstance dominating so many and many a human life, He is *the* one Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, Who would incline most to the side of clemency—if we may so speak without an irreverence—and Whose "Mercy," of necessity, "rejoiceth against judgment." The hope of our race is that the Judge of all *men* is the *man* CHRIST JESUS!

Without, then, any suspicion of infringing upon the domain of the Human-Divine autocracy upon the Sea of Judgment, we may, I think, make the following three premises concerning it. First, it is an elementary principle of even human justice that an act is a crime only if it have been proven to be *intentionally* and *deliberately*

the act of a *criminal*. For instance, a prisoner at the bar, accused of taking the life of another, cannot, by our laws, have the capital sentence passed upon him, unless it be placed beyond a reasonable doubt that the deed of blood with which he is charged was done with intent to kill ; in fact, that it was a case of murder, not of manslaughter. But, with all possible precautions taken, even so human judgment must be sometimes at fault, since it is impossible for one man to investigate another man's heart to the bottom. Human law at best can be but an inadequate arbiter of the *motives* of men's actions.

Secondly, human law—even where its findings are unexceptionable in themselves—can only pretend to punish the transgressor of its penal code in respect of a breach of some specific enactment. Thus it happens that “the man after GOD'S own heart” will always present a butt for the ridicule of the scoffer, and suggest a doubt to the fears of the waverer. I cannot here refrain from calling attention to some sentences¹ from the lips of one who has always been, for myself, a very “Master of Israel,” and whose undisputed eloquence never ran away with his perspicuity, nor interrupted the sequence of his logic. “The answer (*i.e.*, with regard to David) is that a human life is to be appraised less by its prominent but exceptional details than by its governing principle. Details, that is, acts and words, whether good or bad, are of great moment. ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ ‘By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’ These maxims would alone prevent our saying anything so shallow and irreverent as that our acts do not matter.

¹ Liddon. Christmastide Sermons, *Light from Heaven*.

No act, whether good or evil, leaves us as it found us ; it raises or it degrades ; it leaves an imprint—of that let us be sure—which is all its own. David was damaged, deeply and permanently, by the sins which form so prominent a feature in his life ; but these sins did not destroy in him that sense of GOD'S presence and claims, which was at the root of his character. Conspicuous acts in a man's life may look one way, and its governing principle another. . . . Those sins (of David) were the result of a temporary ascendancy of uncontrolled passion. But they did not last long enough to fasten themselves with the force of habit upon his will, or to extinguish altogether the inward light which burned in his conscience."

Thirdly, human justice can but pass sentence upon a criminal *himself* in respect of such and such a breach of this or that specific law. It is powerless, for the most part, to punish *others*, who may transgress in equity precisely the same law indirectly, or in another way, of which the penal code takes no cognizance. A husband, for instance, in a fit of drunken frenzy, cuts his wife's throat. Previously to the murderous assault, the evidence given at the trial goes to prove that there has been language used by the prisoner of a menacing character on more than one occasion, there having been friction between the couple. Such threats, however, *may* have been but the results of a momentary ebullition of sudden passion, in itself, of course, reprehensible enough ; and *might* not have eventuated in positive violence, unless the assassin had been maddened with drink. Yet the law will have little or even nothing to say to the man who either sold or offered spirits to a temporary lunatic, who had already imbibed more than

was obviously good for him. In GOD'S sight will there not be more felons concerned as accessories in such a crime than the gibbeted convict, who actually stained his hands with the blood of a fellow creature? Or take the case of the unfortunate, who, having lost her virtue, and with it any chance of honourable employment, makes a dishonourable livelihood upon the streets. True, she herself is the profligate she makes herself; but, then, what of her seducer, who, by lavish promises of marriage, has silenced the revolt of her outraged conscience? Again, what of the individual, or the State, which has allowed her to be reared in a rookery so overcrowded as to render even decency an impracticability? Vice is not to *her* what vice is to her more privileged sister. She has entered upon the career of womanhood, perhaps of motherhood, heavily handicapped indeed. Yet for the most part the world—more especially the so-called “religious” world—blames her, and her alone, for her depravity of life. But in GOD'S sight will not her fall lie at the doors of a good many more offenders against *His* law than the poor excommunicated outcast herself? For, by quietly acquiescing in many scandals in our social system, we are surely manufacturing criminals wholesale, and *ipso facto*, putting obstacles, or allowing them to be put, in the way of the advancement of CHRIST'S religion. Before you can expect the Christianity, which is CHRIST, to carry the citadel of man's heart by assault, you must first storm the earthworks thrown up by Satan, and Satan's lieutenant, Man, all along the approaches to that citadel.

Without presumption, then, I imagine that we may dare assert as much as this, with regard to the reprobates on the way to the hell of their own deserving. A

reprobate is one who is *consciously* and *inveterately* a rebel against the light that is in him, be that light little or great ; one who, with his eyes open, violates whatever conscience he possesses ; bars the operation of Divine grace in his heart by adopting a suicidal attitude of irreconcilable opposition to the law of his Creator, so far as it is known to him ; and thus frustrates the eternal purpose, for the fulfilment of which he was endowed with the attributes of an immortal spirit. Such an one was Judas Iscariot, concerning whom the world's Redeemer witnessed that it had been better for him never to have been born—never to have become a living soul. Let us, then, examine the history of this malefactor—the history of the one single soul about whose damnation we can entertain no doubt. In what consisted the perdition of Judas Iscariot? He, too, must have been once an innocent babe. Doubtless *his* mother, like all other mothers, at his birth rejoiced that a man was born into the world. The surname "Iscariot," universally applied to him, in all probability signifies the "Kerioth-man ;" that he was a native of Kerioth of Judah. He would probably, therefore, have been brought up as a devout Jew. At the call of JESUS, he, like the rest of the Twelve, must have left all to follow CHRIST. Moreover, he must have been a man of some business capacity, a person of ability, for we are told that "he kept the bag," that is, the common purse of the Apostolic College. Now it is noteworthy that the *first* intimation that there was anything fundamentally wrong with Judas is the startling, apparently sudden and unexpected, pronouncement of the Master, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and yet one of you is a devil." Let it be observed that the utterance of this malediction by our LORD was not occa-

sioned by *any particular misdeed* of Judas. There is no hint here, for instance, of any dishonesty in the disposal of the public monies. The words were used by CHRIST without reference to any specific accusation against the traitor, at the conclusion of the great Eucharistic discourse recorded in S. John vi. They immediately follow S. Peter's confession of faith in the Divine Sonship, in reply to the passionate appeal of JESUS to the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" It was a decisive moment; a crisis of discrimination between the false and the true. Will these men's loyalty to the heart's core stand the test of the falling away of many "disciples," who had hitherto "walked" with their Master? The words, "Yet one of you is a devil," are, therefore, evidently the result of Divine insight into *the whole character* of Judas. It is not, "He has *done* this or the other devilish thing," but, "He *is* a devil." It is clear that Judas did not commit himself, until the very end, to any overt acts of treason; what was wrong with him was his entire bent and bias. Even at the Last Supper, his fellow Apostles were unaware who the false friend was, and asked, each of them, with the blank dismay and transparent honesty of complete innocence, "LORD, is it I?" After all, when we contrast the denial of S. Peter with the bargain of Judas for blood-money, would it be so very easy a matter for moral philosophy to determine which of the two transactions was *in itself* the more reprehensible? The jibe of a scullery-maid, or the pittance at which a slave was valued in the open market—to which of these two paltry incentives to disloyalty was it less discreditable for an Apostle to succumb? Moreover, S. Peter's crime was rendered the more odious by the fact that, first confessor as he was

of the creed of Christendom, he fortified the lie of a coward with the profanity of a blasphemer. Most vulgar criminals are foul-mouthed. Yet of S. Peter our LORD could never have used, in His very last solemn intercession to His FATHER, such language as, "Those that Thou gavest Me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but *the son of perdition.*" This awful title, "Son of perdition," be it remarked, is applied by S. Paul to the anti-Christ of the final apostasy, who is to usher in the Second Advent. Why, then, it may be asked, did our LORD ever elect Judas Iscariot to the apostolate, knowing, as He did, that he was an apostate, the child of hell? Presumably in order to give Judas *the* one chance, which must have saved even Satan himself, if he had not been Satan by choice, by deliberate preference. To be chosen one of the number of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, to spend weeks, months, years in daily, hourly conversation with the SAVIOUR of the world, to witness miracle after miracle, even to the raising of the dead to life, to hear with his own ears the words which no man else ever spoke; nay, more, to hold a position of trust in the society of the companions of JESUS, and yet not only to sin beyond the forgiveness of any but GOD, but also, having so sinned, to die by his own hand in a condition of obstinate impenitence,—all this and more was to be a reprobate, whose destiny must be to "*go to his own place,*" the only place, for the occupation of which he had become mentally, morally, and spiritually qualified. Some of *us* too, as compared with others, have been so fully enlightened and have been so favourably placed, from a religious point of view, as to make it abundantly clear that if, with *our* privileges, we die finally impenitent, we shall have proved ourselves to

be past redemption. Supposing the scene of *our* probation had been the scene of the probation of millions, whom we too loosely describe as "outcasts," should *we* have turned out to be as good at the bottom as they, or should we have been engulfed in the mire of the utter animalism of the beasts that perish? For a Judas heaven would be a worse hell; to the atmosphere of GOD'S High Seat such as he could never acclimatize themselves. It is in mercy, not in wrath, that the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and for ever, against the intrusion of aliens like Judas.

Such, then, is the type of the only reprobate known to be such, on no less an authority than that of JESUS CHRIST. And if I set *my* case beside *his* case, can I—conscience, revelation, education, surroundings, even temperament dissuading me from repeating the terrible mistake Judas made—can *I* seriously question the justice of the very ultimatum, however stern and pitiless it may sound in *other* ears, of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews? ¹ "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the SON of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was

¹ "There is a triple indictment. The manifestation of the apostasy of the offender is described under three distinct aspects, as an act, as an opinion, as a personal and wilful assault. His conduct shows that he has already abandoned his faith, and that too after he had made trial of its blessings. His decision, expressed in deed, is regarded as complete and final. The language used suggests the open repudiation of the baptismal confession and covenant. (1 Cor. xii. 3.) Pliny reports to Trajan that those who were brought away from the Faith *imaginem tuam deorumque simulacra venerati sunt et Christo male dixerunt.*" (Epp. x. 96.) See Bishop Westcott's Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews x. 29.

sanctified, an unholy (Greek perhaps = 'common') thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" I, to whom it is possible, surely, if I would, to become "great in the kingdom of heaven," can I be less than a reprobate, if I die *at the heart* a rebel against the light that flashes all across the path I tread? For such as me, "if we sin *wilfully*," the future can have in store "no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Indeed, some of us have good reason to pray whenever we contemplate the downfall of Judas Iscariot:—

"O SAVIOUR, teach *us* how to take
Warning from that offender;
And keep our souls, for Thy dear sake,
To Thee still true and tender;
Lest, turning wilfully away,
We leave Thy table to betray.

"One downward course of early sin
Indulged in or neglected,
One look of love—our hearts to win
Back to Thy side—rejected,
May *our* souls separation be
Eternally, O God, from Thee."

Yes, *our* condemnation will be merited, if we have not only continued in sin—for "the blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth us from *all* sin," however persistent—*but, also*, having so transgressed, have counted the Bloodshedding of GOD a "common" thing, a trifle to play fast and loose with, as the fit takes us.

But, then, what of the vast majority of souls, since man was first created, who have, or had, less and less light—almost to the vanishing point—as compared with the full illumination, with which *our* lives are flooded? To *us* the reprobation is the final rejection of pardon

and peace in a revealed and known CHRIST. But of those other millions upon millions, some have never "learnt CHRIST" at all; others have had such mistaken, even absurd, notions of CHRIST presented for their acceptance, as either to leave it impossible for them—at any rate without a special miracle on their behalf—to attain, if they would, "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST;" or even as to produce a repugnance to make any profession of such a misconceived Christianity at all. Now, I remark, with regard to the Jews, who lived their earth-lives before the manifestation of the Messiah in the flesh, we are expressly told that "GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets *by divers portions* and in *divers manners*, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His SON." Yet surely these "fathers" underwent their probation on earth, and are reprobate¹ only if they were finally rebels against "the portion" of revelation vouchsafed to each of them in turn, though assuredly, before admittance into heaven hereafter, they too must have fully "learnt CHRIST." If this be a fair deduction in respect of the generations who "fell asleep"

¹ "There is a story told of a heathen convert in byegone days, who paused in the very act of receiving baptism to inquire what had become of his relations and ancestors who had died without hearing of the Gospel. 'They are all in hell,' was the reply. 'Then,' he answered, 'I will share their fate.' The story may be apocryphal, but it conveys a moral bearing directly on the question before us. To overlay a revealed truth with the arbitrary interpretations of human opinion or human passion is the surest way to provoke its entire rejection. Just as the Lutheran tenet of justification produced, by an inevitable recoil, the Socinian denial of the Trinity and the Atonement, the crude and narrow eschatology of the Reformers is chiefly responsible for the later outgrowth of Universalism." H. N. Oxenham, M.A., Preface to first edition of *Catholic Eschatology*, pp. xxv., xxvi.

before the Incarnation took place, it must likewise be true of the subsequent generations, who, *since* the year of our LORD, have only been, or shall only be, in a position to receive their "portion" of Christian enlightenment this side of the grave. Yet they, too, must undergo their probation on earth, and their condemnation, too, will be the condemnation of apostasy from such fragments of the one absolute truth as have been placed within their power either to obey or disobey. Of course, I take it for granted that all *souls*, before ever they can gain admittance to the Beatific Vision, must have repented and believed the Gospel. This being apparently an impossibility, in the full meaning of the great word "Gospel," for such persons this side of the grave, I am absolutely convinced—indeed, I see nothing for it but that there will be a preaching of CHRIST in the Intermediate State to such of them as have not died reprobates. But I do not now dwell upon this expectation, as it will come before us when we proceed later on to investigate in detail the purpose of CHRIST'S descent into Hades. More and more light, I dare not doubt, beyond the veil will be vouchsafed—

"Till in deep calms of space my soul may right
Her nature, shoot large sail on lengthening cord,
And rush exultant on the Infinite!"

Let us now recapitulate what conclusions we have tried to arrive at in the course of this present chapter. We are no Universalists; we confess that there is an everlasting hell for such as dare to "cross the bar" into the Hereafter finally impenitent—for such as have incapacitated themselves for spending an eternity of bliss in the immediate presence of the Triune Godhead, Whose essential attribute is "Holy, Holy, Holy." Such

reprobation is similar in kind, even if not in degree, to the reprobation of Judas; it is the Judas apostasy; a failure, to the very close of man's day of grace, to correspond to whatever "portion" of knowledge and power has come within his reach. To sum up the matter, so far as we have gone, briefly, "This," declares our LORD, in the sacrosanct language of His own great intercession, "this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, Whom Thou has sent." To live for evermore is to have a saving, sanctifying knowledge of GOD as revealed in the face of His CHRIST. But such knowledge can only be gained by revelation here in part, in part beyond the veil, fully and completely in the heaven of heavens. On the other hand, this is the description of the condition of the lost. "The ungodly is so proud, that he careth not for GOD: neither *is God in all his thoughts.*" It is not merely that he has committed such and such sins—all of which, upon his repentance, may be freely forgiven him—but he has deliberately turned his back upon, and flouted *God Himself*; he is, in fact, the only genuine *atheist*. "*Si,*" confessed even Voltaire, "*Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.*" But the atheism in reality of the son of perdition is no mere intellectual dissent from certain theological propositions; it is rather a *moral* and *spiritual* atheism, an absolute refusal, that is, to allow any inspiration of GOD to come into his life, and so cross his will, the will being the real seat of the "*Ego*" of every man or woman. It is of such "fools," who have said, not merely with their lips, but in their "*heart*," "There is no GOD," that a Paul told the Philippians, "even weeping, that they are *the* enemies of the Cross of CHRIST; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose

glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." (*Phil.* iii. 19.)

But when we recall to mind fond memories of many, not like *that*, thank GOD, not like *that*, and yet we feel scarcely all that they might have been, all that we tried our little best to make them—many whose vacant places in our hearts and in our homes nobody else can ever fill—without daring, with the Romanist, to peer into the world of the unseen, without attempting to define its occupations, without conjuring up before our fancies a penal Purgatory, with its balance-sheets debiting each soul with so many years of agony, and crediting it with so many Masses towards its speedier deliverance—without any such inquisitiveness, without any such imaginativeness, with regard to *them* we may surely cherish something more than a hope of fuller, fullest salvation after death. They are guarded words, these of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, guarded, as you would expect them to be, when spoken by a man in his responsible position in dealing with a highly controversial subject; but they sufficiently convey to us just that hope, to which we cling, on behalf of some, aye, the vast majority, of those who have passed or are passing out of our sight, but never out of our hearts. "We do not know," said Archbishop Temple in his now historical first Visitation Charge, "we cannot know, for GOD has not told us, what is happening to them in that other world, and we have no right to set up inventions of our own, and adapt our worship to such inventions. What they may need, in order to be fitted for the final entrance into perfect happiness, we cannot tell. We are told that there will be at the last day some whose work will be burned, but who nevertheless will themselves be

saved, and we see men die who seem to be forgiven, but nevertheless are so full of imperfections that we can hardly believe them as yet fit for heaven. They are not sanctified. They have not that holiness without which no man can see the LORD. We have no right to invent accounts of the way by which they may be purified. We know that they will be changed when the LORD comes ; but the nature, the manner, and the process of that change is not made known." What matter that we cannot describe the fashion of their transformation, what matter that we cannot put our finger upon the exact spot upon the map of a million universes, where is located the scene of the completion of their salvation ? All that we yearn for is the satisfaction of being assured that *some-where*, in *some* way, they are being "changed from glory unto glory," that "they without us cannot be perfected." "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly FATHER is perfect." No ideal short of this is possible to the Church of the Incarnation. If, therefore, that absolute perfection be never reached *here*, then *there*, whither they have gone, our loved and our lost ones, it may, it must be reached. I hope it, I feel it, I know it—

"Hints haunt me ever of a more beyond,
I am rebuked by a sense of the incomplete,
Of a completion over-soon assumed—
Of adding up too soon."

CHAPTER V.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

“**B**UT,” in the course of a discussion upon the subject before us, the present writer was recently asked, “how do *you*, with *your* opinions, get over the merciless anathemas of that pulverized relic of an exploded mediævalism, styled the Athanasian Creed?” I reply that I do not even attempt to “get over” the fulminations of the disputed symbol. On the contrary, I accept its statements, *as they stand*, without reservation. Only I decline to read into it more than it actually says *prima facie*, when there is brought to bear upon the exposition of its contents the ordinary commonsense, which is requisite for the proper understanding of all documents of first-rate importance. It is, of course, no part of my design to enter here upon any argument as to the merits or demerits of the public recital in our churches of this much misunderstood formulary of the Church Universal. Possibly, however, a word or two of *general* introduction to the Creed in question will not be altogether out of place.

The Eighth Article of Religion lays it down that the three Creeds of Christendom “ought to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.” The question, therefore, is whether the Creed of S. Athanasius does or does not conflict with the Bible, by making bolder and harsher assertions than the Bible makes. Let us, then, set Bible and Creed side by side, in order to discover for ourselves

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whether the latter is more "uncharitable" than the former. For apparently, to our generation, the crime of crimes is what is loosely summarized in the pregnant expression, "uncharitableness." It will, I suppose, be sufficient for our purpose to take one cardinal doctrine inculcated by this Creed, the fundamental verity, that is, of the Incarnation of the SON of GOD. Here are the parallel declarations of the New Testament and the Creed of S. Athanasius concerning the dogma in question.

Creed of S. Athanasius.

"Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe *rightly* the Incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

(N.B. In the original Latin, the word translated "rightly" is *fideliter*, which should be rendered "faithfully." The belief requisite for salvation is a matter not of the *head* but of the *heart*. The assent is rather *moral* than merely intellectual.)

New Testament.

"Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved." (*Acts* xvi. 31.)

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the *only-begotten Son of God*." (*S. John* iii. 18.) The words italicised are theological language.

"Except ye believe that I am [He]¹ ye shall die in your sins." (*S. John* viii. 24.)

Seeing, then, that the language of the Creed of S. Athanasius but echoes the language of the New Testament, the identical objection of "uncharitableness" must be raised against the one as the other. They stand or fall together.

¹ In the Greek original the word "He" does not occur. Our LORD is therefore claiming here the same title He also claims in *vv.* 28 and 58. Bishop Wordsworth observes *in loc.*, "literally, 'that I am.' Referring to the words of Jehovah to Moses (*Exod.* iii. 13-15), 'I AM that I AM.' And therefore He means, Unless ye believe that I am God ye shall die in your sins." In the first text cited, it should be noted that the belief required for salvation is a belief not only in Jesus but "the LORD" JESUS.

With these few words of general introduction to the Creed of S. Athanasius, I pass on to those clauses of the symbol, which bear more directly upon the subject, with which I am endeavouring to deal. Do not, it may be asked, with some show of reason at first sight, some of the terms of this Creed expressly exclude from any hope of salvation, here or hereafter, all who reject Trinitarianism? For instance, the last clause, "This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe (Latin, shall have believed) faithfully, he cannot (Latin, will not be able to) be saved?" Possibly, if this particular clause stood alone, it might be so interpreted. But it is obviously unfair to separate one sentence from the main body of any document, and so press it as to render it inconsistent with all the rest. Let us, then, consider *against whom* are the threats of the Creed directed, *who* are the persons so pointedly warned. The English translation of the original Latin hardly makes quite clear the answer to this question. Let us, therefore, have before us the introductory verses of the symbol, *as they actually stand*. I italicise the words which exhibit any difference between our English translation and the literal translation of the Latin.

Latin.

Quicumque *vult* salvus esse,
ante omnia opus est, ut *teneat*
Catholicam fidem.

Quam nisi quisque integram
inviolatamque *servaverit*, absque
dubio *in aeternum peribit*.

English.

Whosoever *wishes* to be *saved*
[possibly *salvus* = to be in a
state of salvation, cf. Vul-
gate of Acts ii. 47, *Qui salvi*
fierent: or = to be (spiritually)
healthy: or = to be safe] be-
fore all things it is necessary
that *he be keeping* the Catholic
Faith.

Which except anybody *shall*
have preserved entire and in-
volute, without doubt he shall
perish *eternally*.

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From this comparison of Latin and English, it is abundantly clear that the objects of the anathemas are persons who have *once received*, and *afterwards lost* their hold upon, the Catholic Faith.¹ "Which was the precise sense (of the word *salvus*) intended by the author of the Creed it may be hard to determine; nor does it seem really important to decide, when once it is fairly realized, that the Creed is only speaking of the *desire* for safety or salvation. But whatever be the precise shade of meaning given to the word *salvus*, the significance of the verbs *teneat* and *servaverit* is perfectly clear. 'Hold' and 'keep' are not inadequate renderings; but if 'keep' and 'preserve' were substituted for them, the drift of the clause would be more sharply brought out; and the English reader would feel at once, that *the warning is against apostasy, i.e., against letting go that which has actually been received*. It is impossible for a man to 'keep' or 'preserve' that which is not previously in his possession. It would be an abuse of terms to tell an impure person to "preserve his chastity." He cannot do it, for such a phrase necessarily implies previous innocence and purity. So also when it is said of the Catholic Faith that 'except everyone do keep [it] whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly,' it is obvious that the only case contemplated is that of men, who have already received it and are in possession of it. This indicates that the warnings of the Creed do not touch the case of the heathen, or of any who are brought up in hereditary error (*e.g.*, Socinians and Arians), but they apply only to those within the Church. The Church is not called upon to judge 'them that are

¹ Gibson. *The XXXIX Articles of the Church of England*, vol 1, pp. 348, 349.

without.' (1 Cor. v. 12.) But she *is* 'bound to declare the whole counsel of GOD;' and it cannot be denied that there is a very severe side to the teaching of Scripture, and that our LORD Himself and His Apostles speak in strong terms of the loss incurred by those who reject the faith."

We have reached, then, by another route the identical position, which has been assumed from the very commencement of this essay, namely, that the lost must be those, and only those, who, by the deliberate act of a perverted *will*,—hence the word '*vult*' in the Creed, the *will* being the seat of the real *Ego* of the man,—have lapsed from, fallen out of correspondence with, the light which had been vouchsafed them. Like moral delinquency, misbelief or disbelief must be the wilful motion of a soul fully conscious of what it is throwing away by failure to retain and use to the full, whatever of grace has been placed at its disposal. Faith, in the New Testament sense of the word, can never be a mere matter of the intellect. A bare assent to so many theological propositions, an orthodoxy, that goes down no deeper than the lips, cannot be dignified with the sacrosanct title of Faith. This is a postulate with S. Paul. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD JESUS, and shalt believe *in thine heart* that GOD hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For *with the heart* man believeth *unto righteousness*; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 9, 10.) With this statement of the Apostle the employment of the word '*fideliter*,' 'faithfully,' instead of '*recte*,' 'rightly,' in the Athanasian Creed, accords well enough. A 'faithful' man is something more than a credulous man. Christian faith is bound up with Christian conduct and character.

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"Think not the Faith, by which the Just shall live,
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling, fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given;
It is an affirmation and an act,
That bids Eternal Truth be Present Fact."

If this be so, it follows that misbelief or disbelief must be something far deeper than a mere mental rejection of, or disinclination to assent to, a set of dogmas rejected or dissented from, in many cases, by reason of misconception, if not utter ignorance, of what they really signify.

Now, not to mention the heathen, who have never heard of the Catholic Faith, can it possibly be argued that the millions in this professedly Christian England of ours have had opportunities of investigating the claims upon their allegiance made by the Catholic Faith sufficiently to render their indifference, or even antagonism, to its teachings and precepts an *unfaithfulness*, a habit of *conscious apostasy*? Certainly such an unfaithfulness, such a conscious apostasy, is the only crime, against the perpetrators of which the Athanasian Creed denounces the forfeiture of salvation. The Athanasian symbol is but the sentence pronounced by the Church upon the sin of deliberate defection from revealed and comprehended truth; and its language simply echoes the language of S. Peter when he protests, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 S. Pet. ii. 21). It cannot be too often insisted upon, that universally the *threats* of Holy Scripture are directed against privileged persons *within the covenant*, who are inveterately "disobedient" in the teeth of their

recognised obligations to obedience, not against "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," who blunder in the darkness. "The absoluteness of Christianity," truly observes the continental theologian, Dorner, "demands that no one be judged before Christianity has been made accessible and brought home to him."¹

I find, therefore, no difficulty in reconciling the statements of the Athanasian Creed with my rooted conviction of the possibility, at any rate for some, of salvation beyond the grave. "We have our hope set on the living GOD, Who is the SAVIOUR of *all men, specially of them that believe.*" The Vulgate reads for the last words of this verse, '*Maxime fidelium.*' Here you have the adjective *fidelis* corresponding to the adverb *fideliter* of the Creed. We repeat what has already been asserted, that we are no Universalists. We hold no brief for the defence of the anticipation of the ultimate salvation of *all men*, without exception. Nevertheless we cannot but discover in such a text a solid ground of assurance, that salvation may extend beyond the borders of 'The Faithful' now and here. In this connection it is at least interesting to note the fact, that in 1562, probably through the influence of Archbishop Parker, the Forty-second Article of 1552 was expunged. The Article in question ran as follows:—

"*All men shall not bee saved at the length.*"

"Thei also are worthie of condemnation who indeavour at this time to restore the dangerouse opinion that al menne, be thei never so ungodlie, shall at length bee saved, when thei have suffered pain for their sinnes a certaine time appointed by God's justice."

Did the English Church, by virtue of this erasure,

¹ *System of Christ. Doctr.* iv. 409.

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intend to leave Universalism an open question? For myself, let me once more reiterate, with the many, many warnings of the Bible staring me in the face, I dare not but repudiate the theory of Universalism. Surnamed, as I believe he has been, 'the prophet of the larger hope,' Lord Tennyson even admits to a difficulty in reconciling the acceptance of Universalism with facts of daily observation :

" The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likeliest GOD within the soul ?

" Are GOD and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

" That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

" I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to GOD,

" I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is LORD of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope."

But we have not yet finished with the Creed of S. Athanasius. The clause, "They that have done good shall go into life *everlasting* ; and they that have done evil, shall go into *everlasting fire*," remains to be considered. In passing, let us note that this Creed does not, as it is sometimes loosely objected, rest everything upon a man's *belief* ; on the contrary, the reward or the

punishment are expressly stated to depend upon good or evil *done*. We are now face to face with the dogma of Everlasting Punishment. Do I, you may perhaps be asking, still deem possible to a GOD of mercy the heart-rending prospect of *endless* torments for the damned? I reply at once, that, *without my conviction of the possibility of salvation for some, at any rate, beyond the grave*, I could never subscribe this awful Article of the Creed of Christendom. GOD could not be any longer to me the GOD I know Him to be, if I believed that He sent His very SON to be the SAVIOUR of *the world*, and yet out of that world all but a minority of a minority were doomed to everlasting hell. In the second place, for myself, I utterly reject and loathe from the bottom of my heart the horrible superstition, which pictures the bodies of men and women, made in GOD'S image, writhing for evermore, in the interests of mere vengeance, beneath the lash and the thumbscrew of a glorified Grand Inquisitor-in-Chief. "When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it, but, at the day of judgment, thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth, thy body will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every sense a string on which the devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament!"¹ Such language to me sounds like high treason against the majesty, not to mention the love, of the Almighty. My GOD cannot exhibit the spite of a bully. When He punishes, His passion will never run away with His dignity. Indeed,

¹ C. H. Spurgeon. *Sermon on the Resurrection of the Dead.*

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we have no right whatever to read into the ugly enough word "damnation" more than it really signifies. The Latin word, *damnum*, from which our word "damnation" is derived, only means "loss."¹ The damned are, therefore, those who have incurred *the* loss, the loss, that is, of the most valuable things ever in their possession :

"What is hell but an eternal thirst,
And burning for the bounty once rejected?"

"As to the place, manner, and kind of these sufferings," remarks Alban Butler,² "nothing has been defined by the Church, and all, who except against this doctrine on account of the circumstance of a material fire, quarrel about a mere scholastic question, on which a person is at liberty to choose either side." I then, for one, repudiate any idea of a physical chastisement, indefinitely prolonged, to which idea the Creed of Christendom does not bind me.

But, it will be insisted, is there an *everlasting* punishment for the damned, of whatever nature that punishment must be? My own answer is that, so far as I dare

¹ "Meanwhile the essence of the suffering of the lost consists in this—as the word "damnation" (*pæna damni*) indicates—that they will be for ever excluded from the Beatific Vision of God; whatever mental or bodily pains (*pæna sensûs*) they may have to endure besides—and there are no doubt manifold gradations of suffering, as of glory—is subsidiary to this, and may be liable to diminution or relief. The *pæna damni*, which is common to all, will be differently realized by individuals according to the measure of their guilt. . . . Calvin, or one of his followers, speaks, in perfect consistency with the principles of his horrible theology, of "babes a span long crawling about the floor of hell." But no such monstrosity is involved in the Catholic doctrine. . . . S. Bernard, who is quoted by Jeremy Taylor, had said four centuries before, *Nihil ardet in inferno nisi propria voluntas*,"—From *Catholic Eschatology*, by H. N. Oxenham, M.A., pp. 18, 19.

² *Lives of the Saints*, Nov. 2.

venture to express an opinion upon such a mystery, there must be an everlasting hell for *some*—for how many or how few GOD alone knows. To me the instinct of horror, under the sense of which one naturally shudders at the mere thought of an endless hell, is immeasurably relieved, when one recognises and convinces oneself, that (1) there is no necessity to contemplate a material fire ; (2) that it is not for “the world,” the vast majority of mankind, that, apparently, interminable chastisement is reserved ; and (3) that not GOD, but *man himself is his own executioner*—and that, not by reason of specific acts of sin committed in ignorance of the real nature of sin, but by reason of his whole bent and bias being finally perverted, so as to render him a conscious, incurable rebel against the light that is in him. This last point is one upon which I would lay all the stress possible. Sin is the disease of the soul, terminating, if not checked in time, in the death of the soul, that is, the loss of all spiritual affinities, *as necessarily as* bodily disease, if not remedied, terminates in physical death, that is, the cutting off of all physical correspondences. Charles Kingsley was, I suppose, reckoned in his day an apostle of “liberal” theology. Yet in speaking of sin and its effects, Charles Kingsley¹ perforce used such decisive language as the following : “It is a very terrible, heart-rending thought for a man to find out that what he will receive is *not punishment* but *wages* ; not punishment, but the end of the very road he is travelling on. That the wages of sin, and the end of sin, to which it must lead, are death ; that every time he sins he is earning those wages, deserving them, meriting them, and therefore receiving them by the just laws of the world of GOD.

¹ *The Water of Life.* Sermon, *The Wages of Sin.*

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That does torment him, that does terrify him, if he will look steadfastly at the broad plain fact—You need not dream of being let off, respited, reprieved, pardoned in any way. The thing cannot be done. It is contrary to the laws of GOD and of GOD'S universe. It is as impossible as that fire should not burn, or water run up hill. *It is not a question of arbitrary punishment, which may be arbitrarily remitted;* but of wages, which you needs must take, weekly, daily, and hourly; and those wages are death: a question of travelling on a certain road, whereon, if you travel it long enough, you must come to the end of it; and the end is death. Your sins are killing you by inches; all day long they are sowing in you the seeds of disease and death. Every sin which you commit with your body shortens your bodily life. Every sin you commit with your mind, every act of folly, stupidity, wilful ignorance, helps to destroy your mind, and leaves you dull, silly, devoid of right reason. Every sin you commit with your spirit, each sin of passion and temper, envy and malice, pride and vanity, injustice and cruelty, extravagance and self-indulgence, helps to destroy your spiritual life, and leave you bad, more and more unable to discern right from wrong; and that last is spiritual death, the eternal death of your moral being. There are three parts in you—body, mind, and spirit; and every sin you commit helps to kill one of these three, and, in many cases, to kill all three together. . . . Oh, how men hate that message!—the message that the true wrath of GOD, necessary, inevitable, is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men. How they writhe under it! How they shut their ears to it, and cry to their preachers, 'No! Tell us of any wrath of GOD but that! Tell us rather of the torments of the damned,

of a frowning GOD, of absolute decrees to destruction, of the reprobation of millions before they are born ; any doctrine, however fearful and horrible ; because we don't quite believe it, but only think that we ought to believe it. Yes ; tell us anything rather than that news, which cuts at the root of all our pride, of all our comfort, of all our superstition—the news that we cannot escape the consequences of our own actions ; that there are no back stairs up which we may be smuggled into heaven ; that, as we sow, so shall we reap.'” Courageous words these from the lips of a courageous man, and surely words that carry the stamp of truth upon their very faces. The damned, those, that is, who have incurred *damnum*, *the* great loss, are those—and those alone—out of a whole world saved, who, with their eyes open, have ultimately and totally incapacitated themselves mentally, morally, spiritually, for communion with their Maker. After all, the Judge but ratifies, gives expression to the sentence of the law. The criminal himself is alone responsible for the sentence unavoidably passed upon him. The only souls excluded from heaven will be those who have excluded themselves. The only prisoners in the pit of destruction will be the men and women who have turned the key of the shut door upon their own backs.

It would seem unnecessary, not to say presumptuous, on my part, to attempt any lengthy discussion of the vexed question as to the meaning of the Greek word “*Aionios*,” rendered in the Authorized Version of our Bibles, “Everlasting.” The controversy upon this subject between Edward Bouverie Pusey, of blessed memory, and Dean Farrar, is now ancient history. The din of the noise of battle has long since been hushed to

silence beside the open grave of the sainted champion in that struggle of the ancient tradition of Christendom, who "being dead yet speaketh" to us, his disciples, of this generation; aye, and will speak to generations as yet unborn, who will revere his name as they will revere few other names in the calendar of notables, who have fought as protagonists in the vanguard of the forward march of England's Church towards clearer light and fuller liberty. What little, therefore, the present writer has to urge on this head will be rather in the nature of a recapitulation and a summary of what has been already advanced in the past, than the suggestion of any new and original thoughts of his own. To me, then, I may say at once, this now familiar argument of S. Augustine¹ remains unanswerable: "For what foolishness were it to value the pains eternal by a fire only of a long continuance, but yet to believe assuredly that life eternal has no end at all, seeing that the LORD in the same place, including both these parts in one sentence, said plainly, 'These shall go into everlasting pains, and the righteous into life everlasting.' Thus does He make them parallels; here are everlasting pains, and there is everlasting life. Now to say this life shall never end, but that pain shall, were grossly absurd. Wherefore, seeing that the everlasting life of the Saints shall be without end, so therefore is it a consequent that the everlasting pain of the damned shall be as endless as the others' beatitude." This argument, I repeat, seems to me one that has not yet been adequately met. It must surely be illogical—and in dealing with a subject of such tremendous importance, imprudent—to contend that the term "*Aionios*" means something different in

¹ *De. Civ. Dei.*, xxi. 23.

the cases of hell and heaven respectively, as applied to both in the New Testament. But this is not all that has to be said. "The argument," pleaded Dr. Pusey¹ in his memorable rejoinder to the present Dean of Canterbury, "is not merely from language. It has a moral and religious aspect. Any ordinary writer, who drew a contrast between two things, would, if he wished to be understood, use the self-same word in the self-same sense. He would avoid ambiguity. If he did not, we should count him ignorant of language, or, if it were intentional, dishonest. I asked (Sermon on *Everlasting Punishment*, p. 24), 'In what matter of this world would you trust one, who, in any matter of this world, should use the self-same word in two distinct senses in the self-same sentence, without giving any hint that he was so doing? In none. Find any case in which you would trust a man who did so in the things of men, and then ascribe it to your GOD in the things of GOD. I could not trust man. I could not believe it of my GOD.'" "When," writes a theologian² of to-day, "the Church is asked if their punishment will endure for ever, she can only reply that GOD has not told her of any end or limit to it, and that, where He has not spoken, she cannot speak. CHRIST'S word 'eternal' is not indeed the same as 'everlasting.' It does not express an interminable succession in time, but something which transcends time. It might even be supposed in some circumstances to suggest a fixed period, and might be translated 'age-long.' But the point to be observed is, that our LORD used the same epithet, in the same context, to describe the portion of the saved and of the lost alike. If the life is eternal, so

¹ *What is of Faith as to everlasting Punishment*, pp. 44, 45.

² Mason. *Faith of the Gospel*, p. 418.

the punishment; if the word fixes a period to the punishment, it fixes a period to the life."

I cannot think that Dean Farrar was altogether justified in laying it down as peremptorily as he did, that "This¹ (the argument of S. Augustine cited above) is absolutely no argument whatever, and ought never to be heard again"—at any rate, on the grounds of the two reasons he has given for his assurance. The very vehemence of his language, in repudiating the argument, appears unnecessary if, in fact, he considered it so futile. He spoke of those who contemptuously set aside "the very same rule of interpretation, when applied to a text like 'As in Adam *all* die, even so in CHRIST shall *all* be made alive.'" I do not know whether I am singular in this my view, but certainly I *do* understand the '*all*' in *both* clauses of this place of Scripture to be of identical value. Is it not matter of revelation, that as *all*, saints and sinners alike, literally die the death of all men, so also *all*, saints and sinners alike, "shall rise again with their bodies," if it be but "to give account for their own works?" "Adam,² the first of men, shall rise, and all that come from him. 'For as in Adam all died, so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.' (1 Cor. xv. 22.) CHRIST is the LORD of the dead, and so hath a right by that dominion to raise them all to life; it is called 'the resurrection of the dead' indefinitely, and comprehendeth them universally. 'By man came death, by man came the resurrection of the dead' (verse 21); and so the resurrection adequately answereth unto death. CHRIST shall 'destroy death;' but if any one should be left still dead, death were not destroyed. The words

¹ See *Eternal Hope*, Excursus iii.

² Bishop Pearson. *On the Creed*, Article xi.

of our SAVIOUR are express and full: 'The hour coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' (*S. John* v. 28, 29.) In the description of the judgment which followeth upon the resurrection, 'When the SON of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory,' it is said that 'before Him shall be gathered all nations.' (*S. Matthew* xxv. 32, 33.) 'We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST' (*Rom.* xiv. 10), and if so, the dead must all rise, for they are all fallen. 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil' (*2 Cor.* v. 10) and before we all appear, the dead must rise that they may appear. This is the latitude of the resurrection: the resurrection of the dead is the resurrection of all the dead, or of all mankind."

Secondly, Dean Farrar seemed to accuse somebody or other of resting his or her hope of everlasting bliss only upon such a "miserable foundation as the disputed meaning of a Greek adjective." For myself, I base my belief *in no doctrine whatever* of my creed upon any one or two, or three words. I depend upon *the general tenor* of revelation, as understood by the Church Catholic in all ages and in all places. Of course the word *Aionios* is no sane man's *only* argument for either everlasting bliss or everlasting pain. GOD'S truth is too great a thing to find adequate expression in the entire vocabulary of any human language—much less in a handful of technical terms. For instance, the dogma of the Holy and Undivided Trinity is not disproved, because modern

scholarship has discovered that the words occurring in the Authorized Version (1 S. *John* v. 7) "There are three that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the Word, and the HOLY GHOST, and these three are One," are in fact probably the interpolation of a later hand, and therefore find no place in the Revised Version. The word '*Aionios*,' applied, as it is, to *both* death and life, *plus* a quantity of other texts, *plus* the consensus of Christendom, seems to me irresistible testimony to the truth of the doctrine of everlasting punishment for some, namely, the finally impenitent. In fact, the burden of proof appears to lie upon the shoulders of those who would challenge this article of the Creed of Christendom. For, surely, if it be a questionable proceeding to rest one's hopes of everlasting bliss on such a "miserable foundation as the disputed meaning of a Greek adjective," it is as questionable a proceeding, to say the least of it, to dispose of one's fears of everlasting pain by arguments based upon 'the disputed meaning of a Greek adjective.' It must always be remembered that religion is a matter not merely for theologians, but for plain, average men and women as well. Christianity has a message for "*the world*," and very few individuals, comparatively speaking, out of that world are thinkers and scholars. Some little time ago the present writer encountered a parishioner of no great education, who occasionally served the office and ministry, to the best of his abilities, of an itinerant evangelist. "Yesterday afternoon," he exclaimed, upon seeing me, "I heard a champion sermon from so-and-so!"—mentioning a luminary of the English Church. "Why '*champion*'?" I enquired. "Because," my companion answered, "he told us there was no hell, and all that. *Now I'm going to enjoy life!*" The

sermon to which he had listened was a clever disquisition upon the meaning of the term '*Aionios*,' interpreted, of course, by the preacher as not, probably, patient of the received signification. Now, seeing that the term had admittedly a '*disputed* meaning,' is it wise, is it safe, is it merciful to unsettle men's lifelong convictions by allocutions that undeniably can never place the matter beyond all doubt? Speaking for myself, as "my brother's keeper," I dare not undertake such a tremendous responsibility. I can hardly conceive that a saint could be considerably damaged spiritually by adhering to his belief in the eternity of bliss, to which he looked forward on the strength of the '*disputed* meaning' of the word he understood to mean '*everlasting*;' but, on the other hand, I can hardly doubt but that a sinner *might* be considerably damaged spiritually, could he convince himself by virtue of the authority of an acceptable teacher of religion, that, after all, the finality of sin's penalty rested but on the '*disputed* meaning' of a single word in a language, perhaps, quite unfamiliar to himself. The spirit of the gambler seems inveterate in humanity. "Odds are even! therefore I'll risk it!" This sounds a perilous suggestion for those, who occupy the seat of the master, to put into the minds of their pupils, when dealing with a subject of such superlative interest.

In point of fact, of course, the dogma of everlasting punishment does *not* depend upon any single word. It is easy enough, no doubt, to dispose of the majority of such texts as the following offhand as, for the most part, mere '*oriental metaphors*.' But though the outward dress of some of the language used may be allegorical, the body of its meaning must be unmistakeable. I mention but a few passages out of many such available

"The chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."
(S. Luke iii. 17.)

"And the door was shut.¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, 'LORD, LORD, open to us.' But He answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, I know you not.'" (S. Matt. xxv. 10, 11.)

[In the reply from within the request for the door to be re-opened is absolutely ignored.]

"For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." (S. Luke iv. 24.)

"Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.'" (S. Matt. xiii. 30.)

"The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden are not worthy." (S. Matt. xxii. 8.)

Varied as are the pictures and figures used by the LORD, they all surely seem to agree in conveying one impression, the impression of *finality*.

¹ "All that they hear from within is the sentence of their exclusion: 'He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not' (cf. S. Matt. vii. 23); He does not *know* them, that is, in that sense in which the Good Shepherd *knows* His sheep, and is known of them. (S. John x. 14.) Other parallel passages in which exactly the same emphasis is laid on the words are these: Is. xxxvii. 18; cxliv. 3; Nah. i. 7; Amos iii. 2; Hos. xiii. 5; S. Matt. xv. 12; 2 S. Tim. ii. 19. Such knowledge is of necessity reciprocal, so that Augustine's remark, seeming a slight, is indeed a very profound one, that this '*I know you not*' is nothing else than 'Ye know not Me!' (Ep. cxl. 35.) The exclusion of the foolish virgins from the marriage feast, if this interpretation be correct, is not temporary; but, so far as our horizon reaches, final. Many regard it in a different light, as who would not gladly do? . . . but to me the sterner and severer interpretation alone approves itself as the true." (Is. lxv. 13.) Trench. *On the Parables*. Parable xiii.

Gehenna, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (*S. Mark ix. 48.*)

[These words certainly occur *once* in this place, if not also twice more in *vv. 44 and 46.*]

"Whosoever shall speak against the HOLY GHOST, I shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." (*S. Matt. xii. 32.*)

"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross from hence to us." (*S. Luke xvi. 26.*)

[This passage, of course, refers to *Hades*, the state after death, not to *Gehenna*, the place of the damned after judgment; but the doom of the finally impenitent is settled at death.]

"As touching those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift. . . . *it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.*" (*Heb. vi. 4-6.*)

[Bishop Westcott remarks *in loc.* "*Vulg. eos qui semel illuminati sunt.* The object is placed before the verb in order to fix attention upon the variety and greatness of the gifts which have been received and cast away. The enumeration of these abandoned blessings prepares for the statement of the impossibility of restoring them."

On the whole, for myself, I cannot but feel that, in handling a subject of such moment as that of everlasting punishment, it *does* seem a little bit hazardous to dismiss a catena of quotations on the loose plea that they consist of so much metaphor; to throw away the kernel, because the shell may be discarded, when it has served its purpose, namely, to contain that kernel. After all, any ordinary proverb, in any language, must convey the definite truth it is intended to convey, though

the shape, in which that truth is presented to the imagination, may be a figurative shape. It would seem to me that our LORD and His Apostles have revealed enough, and just enough, to warn men, without driving them to the despair, to which more literal threats might have driven them.

"It must be admitted," concedes Dean Plumptre in his valuable work on the subject before us, "that the teaching of the Gospel sanctions the appeal to the fear of hell, even in the form from which we often shrink as too strong and coarse for the refinement of a later age. . . . The preaching of mendicant friars, of Jesuit missionaries, of Wesley. . . . so far as it is addressed to those who are in the same spiritual state as those who listened to our LORD, may legitimately appeal to the sanction of His authority. They cannot be altogether wrong if they speak now, as He spoke of old." A little further on, however, he remarks, "It is not said, even of the foolish virgins, or of the man which had not on the wedding garment, that the door, which was shut upon them, would never again be opened, and that they were to be left for ever in the outer darkness. The terms of the parable could be satisfied by their exclusion from the joy and triumph symbolized by the first resurrection of Rev. xx. 6."¹ But, surely, there are two obvious rejoinders upon the tip of one's tongue. First, if "it is not said that the door, which was shut upon them, would never again be opened," neither is there so much as a hint vouchsafed that the request of the foolish virgins for it to be re-opened would be even considered: in fact, as has been remarked above, their request is absolutely ignored; it is only met by their utter repudia-

¹ See *Spirits in Prison*, pp. 59, 62, 63.

tion as not known to the Master of the feast. Secondly is not any reference to 'the first resurrection' somewhat strained and unnatural? What I would venture to insist upon is this. How would the parable be likely to be understood by the plain, average folk, to whom the Gospel of CHRIST is primarily addressed? "The Gospel," protested Dr. Pusey,¹ in answer to the almost sarcastic remarks of Dean Farrar, "is for those who are 'content with the obvious'—the poor. During three centuries of martyrdom the simple received our LORD'S word in their simple sense. He did not use 'emotional appeals.' He, the Truth, taught, He tells us, what He had received from the FATHER—"I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them.'" (*S. John* xviii. 8.) But one feels completely in accord with Dean Plumptre when he adds: "If it be so (that is, that the closing of the door and the expulsion into outer darkness are final), it must be because the absence of the wedding-garment, the failure to keep the lamp burning, is, though different in form yet identical in essence with the blasphemy against the HOLY SPIRIT, which has never forgiveness, and implies the induration of heart, which makes repentance impossible, and, therefore, excludes forgiveness." It is perhaps, worth noting that in the parable of the Ten Virgins the Authorized Version has "Our lamps are gone out." This does not represent the Greek, which, as translated by the Revised Version, has "Our lamps are going out." The finally excluded, therefore, are not those who had received no grace and light, but those who had failed to keep received grace and light alive in their hearts until their LORD appeared.

¹ *What is of Faith as to everlasting punishment*, pp. 45, 46.

It has been asked, may not punishment for a period of time—long as you like to imagine it—in the end purify? One would give a great deal to be able to think so. But we are afraid from our knowledge of human nature that this argument cannot be adduced with much encouragement to its adducer. The experience of *this life* seems to be that, in the case of *determined* sinners—and such only hell awaits—punishment tends but to *harden*, not to cleanse. Certainly GOD'S providences, here and now, of sorrow, sickness, death, do *not* apparently succeed in making converts of such as would seem reprobate. What resolutions of amendment of life we ourselves have often enough

“ In our times of deep distresses,
In each dark and trying hour,”

made indeed—but broken when “the tyranny was overpast”! For how many souls is it true that “The road to hell is paved with good intentions!” Who of us but must confess the applicability of Heber's searching lines to ourselves?

“ He called me in the time of dread,
When death was full in view;
I trembled on my feverish bed,
And rose to sin anew !”

It is revealed, for our admonition, that when angels poured out the vials of GOD'S wrath, no confession of sin followed, no appeal for mercy. On the contrary, “men were scorched with great heat; and they blasphemed the Name of the GOD, Which hath the power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory. . . . They gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the GOD of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their

works." (*Rev.* xvi. 9-11.) Certainly, *if* it were possible that lost souls *could*, at any point in Eternity, become purified by the corrective discipline of the pain of loss, I, for one, should be prepared to profess my belief that their punishment might terminate with the accomplishment of that purification. The case of the rich man in the parable of S. Luke xvi., has been cited as an instance, in which the fire, in which he is represented as "tormented," so far changed him for the better as to render him solicitous for the welfare of his five brethren, "lest they also come into this place of torment." I think, however, that Archbishop's Trench's¹ refutation of this theory seems warranted by the facts. "In this anxiety," says the Archbishop, "for the welfare of his brethren, which he, who hitherto had been merely selfish, expresses, some have seen the evidence of a better mind beginning, and the proof that suffering was already doing its work in him, and awakening the slumbering germ of good. With this, were it so, would of necessity be connected his own ultimate restoration, and the whole doctrine of future suffering not being vindictive and abiding, but corrective and temporary. But the rich man's request grows out of another root. There lies in it a secret justifying of himself and accusing of GOD. What a bitter reproach against GOD and against the old economy is here involved: 'If I only had been sufficiently warned, if only GOD had given me sufficiently clear evidence of these things, of the need of repentance, of this place as the goal of a sensual, worldly life, I had never come hither. But though I was not, let, at all events, my brethren be duly warned.' Abraham's answer is brief, and almost stern: they *are* warned: they

¹ *On the Parables.* Parable xxvi.

have enough to keep them from that place of torment, if only they will use it: '*They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them!*'" After all, Milton seems to be but magniloquently confirming what all common experience goes to prove, when, in the following powerful lines,¹ he describes the attitude of Satan, fallen headlong from his high estate, as an attitude of open and obstinate defiance:—

“‘ Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,’
Said then the lost Archangel, ‘ this the seat
That we must change for Heaven? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since He,
Who now is sovran, can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from Him is best,
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
Above His equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than He
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free: the Almighty hath not built
Here for His envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.’”

Assuredly it is of no *remedial* fire that that awesome passage speaks, which describes the doom of the deliberate rebel against the infinite compassion of the Atonement. “Of how much sorer *punishment* (the Greek word here used has a purely retributive sense)²

¹ *Paradise Lost*, Book I., 242–263.

² “The noun occurs nowhere else in the New Testament (the verb is found in *Acts* xxii. 5; xxvi. 11). It expresses simply the notion of retributive punishment in regard of the offence.

suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the SON of GOD? . . . For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the LORD." (*Heb. x. 29, 30.*)

One, to my mind, quite decisive argument remains to be re-stated. It concerns the doom pronounced upon Judas Iscariot. "Our LORD said of Judas Iscariot, that 'it were good for him if he had never been born.' (*S. Matt. xxvi. 24; S. Mark xiv. 21.*) No Christian will dare to attribute to the words of CHRIST, especially on so awful a theme, a mere rhetorical or dramatic force; it is worse than idle to talk here about 'the language of Eastern hyperbole.' And yet, if they are really true, they are decisive of the question before us. If the soul of Judas is hereafter, at however inconceivably remote a future, and after whatever countless ages of purgatorial suffering, to be restored to the light of His countenance, 'in Whose presence is the fulness of joy,' it is simply untrue to say that it were better for him never to have been born. Who counts the billows when the shore is won? Who would cast back a moment's regret at the all but interminable vista of cleansing agony through which he had passed at last into the light of the Beatific Vision and the sinless charities of his immortal home? . . . For them the past would soon fade into an imperceptible speck on the ocean of boundless beatitude, to whom

'Pain hath been the fiery portal
To over measure of perpetual bliss.'

It will be seen that, in the case of the perfect fulfilment of a perfect law, the ends of retribution and correction absolutely coincide. . . . The certainty of the retribution, to which the writer has pointed, lies in the knowledge of the Divine character."—Bishop Wescott's *Commentary on the Hebrews*: on x. 29, 30.

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If the soul of man is immortal, Judas lives ; if CHRIST spoke truly, he lives in everlasting woe." ¹

But, be it emphasized once more, it would appear that it is only the conscious reprobate whom the eternity of chastisement awaits. There is only one sin that can be forgiven, "neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." (*S. Matt.* xii 32.) Other sins presumably, short of this one sin, may surely find pardon, either here or hereafter, if not here. One, we are told, asked JESUS, "LORD, are there few that be saved?" (*S. Luke* xiii. 24, 25.) Our LORD'S reply is *not* "Yea, there be few." It is "Strive (Greek. *Agonize*) to enter in by the narrow way." Ye, My disciples, He would seem to say, look to yourselves, make your own salvation sure. Leave alone curious questions as to "how many," or "how few." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" To *such* a perdition we may feel satisfied that only the absolutely, utterly lost by their own fault, can be sentenced from a seat of judgment occupied by Him, in Whose hands and feet will be visible the prints of the wounds of unutterable compassion. With this exquisitely beautiful quotation,² cited by Dr. Pusey in his already frequently mentioned reply to Dean Farrar, this chapter shall fitly close. "I have no profession of faith to make about them (those without) except that GOD is infinitely merciful to every soul ; that no one has been, or ever can be lost by surprise, or trapped in his ignorance ; and, as to those who may be lost, I confidently believe that our heavenly FATHER threw His arms round each created spirit, and looked it full in the

¹ From *Catholic Eschatology*, by H. N. Oxenham, M.A., pp. 147, 148.

² Faber, *The Creator and the Creature*, B. 3, ii. end.

face, with bright eyes of love, in the darkness of its mortal life, and that, of its own deliberate will, it would not have Him."

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

I SHALL never forget, so long as I live, the consternation, if not horror, of which I was the innocent cause, the first time I ventured to hint at a funeral in my present cure, that the deceased was *not* that very moment in the Heaven of Heavens, clothed in dazzling white, and playing a harp of gold upon the stairs of GOD'S High Seat. One woman, who, in the capacity of a nurse, is generally in evidence in the sick rooms of the parish, has never forgiven me to this day. In her eyes ever since I bear upon me "the mark of the beast," and she, therefore, utterly refuses my ministrations at home or in Church, as a disseminator of the frauds of anti-Christ! I can also recall the look of open-mouthed astonishment upon the faces of the children in the Sunday School, when, at my first catechizing here, I ventured to express myself as the least little bit doubtful about the accuracy of the ready reply of one of them: "*Our Joe be i' heaven, wi' white wings, an' sich a voice as never was, for singin' psalms!*" And yet there is no mistaking such plain statements of the New Testament as the following:—

"But when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, *then* shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the

goats on the left. *Then* shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (*S. Matt.* xxv. 31-34.)

"It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after this (cometh) judgment." (*Heb.* ix. 27.)

"For the LORD Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in CHRIST shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall *together with them* be caught up in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and *so* shall we ever be with the LORD." (*1 Thess.* iv. 16, 17.)

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into *Abraham's bosom*:¹ and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in *Hades* (i.e., the place of darkness, not *Hell*, as in the Authorized Version) he lifted up his eyes, being in

¹ The expression, 'Bosom of Abraham' as the place of rest of faithful souls, was already familiar to the Jews. See *Josephus* de Macc. ii. p. 514, where the Maccabees say, "Us having so died, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob will receive into their bosoms." (*Wetst.*) Wordsworth *in loc.* The other expression 'Paradise,' Greek *Paradeisos*, is a word of Persian origin, and signifies a park, or pleasure grounds. "The Greek translators quite naturally gave *paradise* as the equivalent of *garden* in Gen. ii. 8, 'The LORD GOD planted a paradise in Eden;' in which they are followed by *Josephus* (*Ant.* I., 1 sect. 3). Paradise, or the Garden of Eden, hence became among the later Jews a common appellation for the state of bliss, which awaits the just after death—by which they meant, that delights like those of Eden are enjoyed by the departed — they are in a paradisiacal state. (See a large array of proofs in *Wetstein* on Luke xxiii. 43)." *Bible Dictionary*, edited by Dr. Fairbairn. Of course, glorification at death would do away with the day of judgment altogether; for no soul could be summoned from a heaven already possessed to undergo a judgment, upon which admission into that heaven depended.

torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus *in his bosom*." (S. Luke xvi. 22-24.)

"Verily I say unto thee, To-day, shalt thou be *with Me in Paradise*." (S. Luke xxiii. 43.)

[*'In Paradise,'* not in *Heaven*: for on Sunday morning our LORD tells S. Mary Magdalene, "I am *not yet ascended* unto the FATHER." (S. John xx. 17). Therefore, to be with JESUS that same day, the penitent thief could not have been in Heaven.]

"When CHRIST, Who is our life, shall appear, *then* shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

The popular mistake of supposing that the departed pass immediately upon death into Heaven arises, no doubt, from several causes, the principal of which is the mistranslation of the words in the Creed, "He descended into *hell*," the word '*hell*' being also employed, in common parlance, to *Gehenna*, the place of the final perdition, after judgment, of the damned. The Latin of the Symbol, of course, reads '*Descendit ad inferna*,' the Roman Breviary, like the Bangor Antiphonary, reading '*ad inferos*,' i.e., He descended to the inhabitants of the lower world, the dead. The error is fortified by a like misrendering in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (S. Luke xvi.), cited above. Dives is not yet in "the outer darkness" of final excommunication, but, though separated already from him by '*a gulf fixed*,' is near enough to Lazarus to '*see*' him '*afar off*.'

Another cause of the common misconception is the oftentimes extravagant rhapsodies of the writers of hymns, which have become first favourites. I think we hardly yet realize to what an enormous extent the theology of the nation is derived rather from Hymn-

books than the Bible or the Prayer Book. As a pro-Roman advocate, the late Dr. Faber became convinced of the importance of this circumstance. "There is scarcely," he says, "anything, which takes so strong a hold upon people as religion in metre, hymns, or poems, on doctrinal subjects. Everyone, who has had experience among the English poor, knows the influence of Wesley's hymns and the Olney collection. Less than moderate literary excellence, a very tame versification, indeed often the simple recurrence of a rhyme is sufficient: the spell seems to lie in that. Catholics even are said to be sometimes found poring over the verses of the Olney Hymns, which the author himself can remember acting like a spell upon him for years strong enough *to be for long a counter-influence to very grave convictions*, and even now to come back, from time to time, unbidden into the mind."¹ Churchmen can never fail to acknowledge their obligations to the compilers of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* for the very general inculcation of many and many a forgotten and unfamiliar dogma of the Catholic Faith, which has been the result of the frequent singing of old favourites from that grand collection of sacred poesy. It is, therefore, all the more to be regretted that the possibly misleading couplet,

" E'en now to their *eternal home*,
There pass some spirits blest,"

was suffered to stand in the revised edition of the now almost universal Church of England hymnary. Opponents, for the most part well-meaning and honestly alarmed, of the Church Revival in our midst have been in the habit of attacking, in particular, Communicants'

¹ Preface to edition of 1849 of Faber's Hymns.

Manuals and other Devotional "Helps" put into the hands of the young by the clergy they suspect of Romeward tendencies: but the suppression of any amount of such compilations—some of them, I fear, of a too foreign complexion to be beneficial to English readers—would be of little efficacy, so long as the disputed truths are enshrined in, and conveyed to our children's children, by hymns sung day after day in Church, or School, or home. Probably the only enrichment of the Prayer Book attainable in our generation will come in the shape of the introduction of hymns at various points in the Liturgy to supply its manifest deficiencies. For instance, it is now practicable to restore to the Anglican rite, so far as may be, the lost *Epiclesis*, or Invocation of the HOLY GHOST, by the interpolation, during the oblation of the elements, of one of the additional hymns to be found in the new Supplement to our most widely used hymnal. With respect to the subject immediately before us, the present writer has heard in his own Church hymns sung to the echo by large mixed congregations of any or no creed, which treat of the true doctrine of the Intermediate State, and of the practice of prayers for the departed. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that in England to-day the composer of a hymn, which succeeds in gaining the ear of the public—especially if set to taking music—may claim, in a very real sense, to be exercising the prophetic office.

A third reason for the popular heterodoxy with regard to instantaneous glorification at death would seem to me the long neglect of the observation of the festival of our LORD'S Ascension. Possibly it might be safe to assert, that, had Ascension Day survived, like

Good Friday, as a general holiday, half the prevailing error would never have arisen. Englishmen, as a whole, will never regain their hold upon the faith of the Church of the ages, until they have once more, amid the recovered splendours of a worship "in the beauty of holiness," learnt to "say with their lips *and believe in their hearts*" the now barely recognised articles of the Creed of Christendom, which declare, "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the FATHER. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end." From the virtual discrowning of the CHRIST, regarded as but the SAVIOUR and not also the LORD, has resulted the depreciation of His regal, priestly, and judicial functions.

Yes, but, it may be objected, is not the discussion of an immediate Heaven or a Heaven at the end of time, after all, a merely academic discussion? What matters it where exactly our dead be, so long as they are at rest, with JESUS? Assuredly, were not this subject a most practical subject, the present writer would never have undertaken to make this attempt at its elucidation. But, like many another working parish priest, I have been driven to lift up my voice, not once nor twice, upon the subject, because its importance has been brought home to me by the fact of the prevalence, amongst people one comes across any day of one's life, of the most pestilent, soul-destroying heresies in connection with it. I am frequently officiating at funerals, the graveyard of my Church being virtually a cemetery for the neighbourhood, and also at the preliminary gatherings of mourners, previous to the burials themselves, in the houses of the deceased, which are

customary in Lancashire and Yorkshire, possibly all over the North of England. In the exercise of this ministry, I have been oftentimes literally appalled by the—to me—almost blasphemous confidence, undisguisedly professed, that practically all, whose corpses I see interred, pass immediately from a life of apparently utter indifference to the things of GOD, if not of mortal sin, to the full and complete fruition of the Beatific Vision. Indeed it seems almost as if Mary, and John, and Paul, and Michael must give way and make room before the throne of GOD, each time the passing bell tolls out the departure of a soul, saved, it may be, but at the eleventh hour! The aureole of an Archangel would appear obtainable any day, for the mere asking, by anybody and everybody! Against the utterance of such, I fear, widely current heterodoxy, a protest should be raised in no measured language, since loose talk of such a character is tantamount to saying that death, of all things, death, according to S. Paul, “an enemy to be destroyed,” death, which CHRIST “abolished,” death is the salvation and sanctification of souls; death, and not CHRIST and His awful HOLY GHOST of promise. It *was* perilous beyond words to souls, the mediæval traffic in Masses at a price, by which deliverance from Purgatorial pains was reduced to a commercial contract; but, after all, is it so much less perilous to souls the fond delusion, that what was true of the first century of the Christian era, is not true of the twentieth, namely, “There shall in no wise enter into it (the New Jerusalem ‘coming down from heaven from GOD, having the glory of GOD’), anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie?” (*Rev.* xxi. 27.)

"Anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie." Yes, here is the point. Who of us, aye, of the very best of us, can claim that he or she stands altogether outside of the scope of this veto? "Holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD." (*Heb. xii. 14.*) Here no *imputed righteousness of Another* is spoken of: it is '*the sanctification, the preparation for GOD'S presence, that we ourselves are called upon to follow after.*' It has to be reached by *us*: effort on *our* parts is requisite for its attainment. Who of us, again, aye, of the very best of us, feels that he or she has succeeded in becoming holy enough to stand to-day in the very sight of the Triune Godhead, Whose ultimate attribute is implied in the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy?" "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD." (*S. Matt. v. 8.*) Once more, who of us, aye, of the very best of us, is yet conscious of such an absolute purity to the heart's core as would qualify us for *that* Vision? "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly FATHER is perfect." (*S. Matt. v. 48.*) Nobody, surely, this side of the grave, dare arrogate to himself or herself a perfection after the fashion of the perfection of the Godhead Himself. Was, then, the voice of the WORD of the living GOD but an echo of the empty hyperboles of an imaginative idealist? Did the Master command the disciple to aim at impossibilities? No; a thousand times no, unless coincidently with the lapse of the few and evil days of man's pilgrimage here upon earth is stifled to inanition the *Sursum Corda* of humanity's instinctive aspirations higher, ever higher, to GOD'S Seat climbing. No; the standard of perfection after the fashion of GOD'S perfection is too exalted a standard to be attainable

within the limitations of mere Time. "That He (CHRIST), might present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (*Eph.* v. 27.) Immaculate! Without one stain! But how far "the Church militant here in earth" is off reaching such a condition of absolute innocency! Is it, then, the dream of an enthusiast, this anticipation by a Paul of a Church in the future without a single defilement? "I espoused you (the members of the Church of Corinth), to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to CHRIST." (2 *Cor.* xi. 2). Yet this identical Corinthian Church, which was to become the chaste bride of the sinless CHRIST, had had to be sternly reprimanded by the same Paul for the existence in her midst of divisions, the breach of the brotherhood: of fornication "Such as is not even among the Gentiles" (1 *Cor.* v. 1): of the eating of "things sacrificed to idols" (1 *Cor.* viii. 1): of actual drunkenness at the Celebration of the Holy Mysteries themselves. (1 *Cor.* xii.) No need of any further quotations. It is abundantly clear, on all hands, that heaven is for the heavenly-minded, the worship of the white-robed "multitude that no man can number" can only be participated in by such as have been washed whiter than the driven snow. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. . . . And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are *without fault* before the throne of GOD." (*Rev.* xiv. 4, 5.) Have I, in the secret chamber of my own heart's heart, ever *thought*—though, perhaps, never dared to express the thought in word—something equivalent to this? 'GOD is very merciful: somehow or other I shall

manage to scramble into heaven. *One* will not be noticed in an innumerable host passing in.' The Truth Himself has forestalled that vain imagination. It was in the familiar story concerning a man, "which had not on a wedding-garment." But "when the King came in"—as He must inevitably do in His own good time—"to behold the guests," His unerring eye fell at once upon the intruder: there was no shirking that glance. What reply had the unbidden stranger to make to the stern, withal pitiful, question of the host, "Friend"—even thus and now, *Friend*—"how camest *thou* in hither?" He had not a word to say for himself, not a syllable of excuse to offer: he stood self-condemned in that tremendous Presence: *that*, his conscience told him, was no place for *him*: "*he was speechless.*" He must, therefore, go out of the daylight into "the outer darkness" of his own deliberate choice: lost, not by the arbitrary fiat of a merciless autocracy, but lost, because he himself, by his silence, confessed to the justice of his own exclusion from the bridal feast of the redeemed by a love, to which he was incapable of responding.

I am aware that I shall be pulled up by indignant questions like, "Do you not, then, believe in justification by faith? In the Atonement made upon the cross? In the finished work upon Mount Calvary?" I shall be reminded, perchance, of the immortal lines:—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and Thou alone."

Yes, I reply, I yield to no man with regard to the intensity of my conviction of the paramountcy of "simple Gospel truth." If I desired to describe myself by any title beside that of Christian, I should style myself an Evangelical Catholic. But it is *the* Gospel, the whole Gospel, not one half of the Gospel, that I need. According to that Gospel, I find that sanctification is as necessary to salvation as justification: according to that Gospel, I find—to use the words of one of the most beautiful Collects in the Common Prayer Book—that GOD has given His only-begotten SON "to be unto us *both* a sacrifice for sin, *and also an ensample of godly life*:" and, therefore I pray, "Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, *and also daily endeavour ourselves* to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life." I dare not minimize, not to say ignore, the doctrine of the Incarnation, or the revelation of the work and office of the HOLY GHOST. "The faith which simply accepts the bounty of forgiveness through CHRIST'S sacrifice, must pass necessarily into the faith, which corresponds obediently with the Divine love. Thus the purpose of the Atonement is never expressed as being that we should be let off punishment, or simply that we should be forgiven, but rather that, being forgiven, we should be united to CHRIST in His life. (1 *Thess.* v. 10.) The propitiation, which CHRIST offered, is only the removal of a preliminary obstacle to our fellowship with Him in the life of GOD. The work of CHRIST 'for us' has no meaning or efficacy till it has begun to pass into the work of CHRIST 'in us' by His assimilating Spirit. It was only as baptized into CHRIST, and sharing His Spirit, that Christians could

accept the forgiveness of their sins through the shedding of CHRIST'S Blood. The sacrament of new life is also the sacrament of absolution, and the washing away of sins. Nothing in fact can be plainer in this Epistle to the Ephesians than that 'the redemption through CHRIST'S Blood, even the forgiveness of trespasses' (*Eph.* i. 7; cf. ii. 13 ff.), was only a preliminary removal of the obstacles to that fellowship with GOD in CHRIST by His Spirit which is the secret of the Church."¹ I dare not disregard the moral maxims of the Sermon on the Mount. I cannot square the belief in 'salvation merely by virtue of a conscious acceptance of the love that bled as a satisfaction for all sins' with such a statement as this of S. Paul, "This is the Will of GOD, *even your sanctification.*" (*1 Thess.* iv. 3.) I know that, if accepted at all, my acceptance will not be the due reward of any deed of righteousness which I have done; I shall be but "accepted in the Beloved." But, in answer to the question, that has been asked times without number, if not in words, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" I protest, with S. Paul, "GOD forbid! We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" (*Rom.* vi. 1, 2). For, as a rational being, having eyes to see with, I cannot contradict the fact of every day experience, the most obvious, indisputable of facts, that sanctification does *not* in all cases follow "justification:" that the justified according to their own accounts, the "saved"—to use a colloquialism—do *not* at once, *ipso facto*, develop habits of virtue: do *not*, at once, *ipso facto*, attain to the character of sainthood. When they die, they are *not* such as would appear likely to answer the description "*without fault* before the throne." To

¹ Gore. *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 62, 63.

again quote the words of the present Archbishop of Canterbury's Primary Visitation Charge : " We see men die, who seem to be forgiven, but nevertheless are so full of imperfections, that we can hardly believe them as yet fit for heaven. They are not sanctified. They have not that holiness, without which no man can see the LORD." If this be so with the theologically 'justified' on earth, what of the millions upon millions, almost or quite outside of the scope of religious influences, or, at best, with inadequate, if not utterly false, notions of the discipline of the Christian life? What, again, of the heathen—whole nations, peopling vast continents—to whom the Name of JESUS, "the only Name whereby we must be saved," is the Name, even if ever heard by them at all, of an utter stranger. Millions—millions—millions of souls, into whom GOD has breathed the breath of life, *all damned*, not for a day, not for a year, but for an Eternity! Is it credible? Can GOD'S sunlight still shine upon a universe, nine out of every ten of whose inhabitants are on the highroad, through no fault of their own, to unending perdition? Is it credible, I say? If it really be the case, that GOD deliberately created millions, aye, myriads of men, women, and even little innocent babes, *to inherit* damnation for "yesterday, to-day, and for ever," whereas one here and another there, owing to his or her favoured circumstances, *can* be brought to know and be saved through CHRIST eternally—if it be the case, that *I*, the weakest and sinfulness of men, may cherish a hope of ultimate salvation, whilst whole generations of men, better than myself, are helplessly perishing before my eyes every day that dawns, then I, for one, would fain protest with respect to *them*, as S. Paul protested with respect to his own

countrymen, the Jews, "I could wish that myself were accursed from CHRIST for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (*Rom. ix. 3.*) Surely Lord Bacon is right when he says, "It were better to have no opinion of GOD at all, than such an opinion, as is unworthy of Him : for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely."

But this "holiness, the sanctification, without which no man shall see the LORD," when, where, is it to be acquired? In this life? Within the span of fourscore years at the most? The education for an Eternity to be completed in a period considerably under one century? Why, we require half a lifetime in which to educate ourselves for the responsibilities of manhood and womanhood in Time. Even then, the best educated of us are those who are still educating themselves. Is Eternity so little longer, of so little more moment than Time, that we need but a score or two more years' education for Eternity than we need for Time? Look at the history of our race : what centuries it has taken for the civilized world to reach even the moderately high standard of duty now recognised as obligatory upon good citizens ! Look, again, at the revelation of GOD to man—how gradual it has been ! "GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets *by divers portions*, and in divers manners, hath *at the end of these days* spoken unto us in His SON." (*Heb. i. 1, 2.*)

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves, nor leaves of stone ;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit."¹

¹ J. R. Lowell. '*Bibliolaters.*'

Yes, imprinted upon the broad face of history, secular or ecclesiastical, is GOD'S method of self-manifestation : and that method is, for the most part, not sudden metamorphosis, but tedious discipline : not instantaneous consummation, but slow—it would seem sometimes to us—fearfully slow progress. At any rate, it may safely be said, that the New Testament uniformly looks forward to “the day of CHRIST” as the *terminus ad quem* for Christian hope. “The Regeneration” will take place “when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory,” (*S. Matt.* xix. 28)—*then*, and not before then : “until the times of the restoration of all things,” the ascended JESUS will not descend again to earth for judgment. (*Acts* iii. 21.)

If, then, this *sine qua non* for the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, this “holiness,” “the sanctification” is not reached here and now, it must be reached somewhere else in the future : otherwise not a single soul will ever see GOD. It is not here : it is not now that it is reached. Even a Paul confessed, “I delight in the law of GOD after the inward man : but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me”—Paul, saint and evangelist of evangelists—“into captivity under the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” (*Rom.* vii. 22–24.) Conflict—especially such a conflict as this of which the Apostle of the Gentiles speaks—entails upon the warrior wounds at times, bondage at times, the necessity to be always on guard. Nor is any war over the very instant the last shot is fired. When “the labourer’s task is o’er,” when “the battle day is past,”

the soul at rest in GOD'S calm Paradise needs an interval of refreshment, in which to wipe off the blood-stains, the sweat, and the dust of the hardly won fight, preparatory to donning the garments of glory, clad in which each victor—not alone, not one by one, but shoulder to shoulder with all his comrades of every regiment, who have gone or shall go to the front in turn—will march his and their last march of all, along the triumphal way, that leads into the golden city, whose name is Jerusalem, the abode of endless, unending Peace. Yes, I reply unhesitatingly, it must be *there*, in the world beyond death, between death and judgment, the place of the expectation of All Souls: it must be in GOD'S Paradise, that "the holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" is developed beyond the possibilities of the limitations of Time—developed, intensified, perfected.

How know I this? I turn over the pages of my New Testament, and find here and there but a hint, it is true, but a partial and momentary lifting of the veil, but a suggestion; and yet, in all, sufficient evidence to produce conviction in unprejudiced minds. To begin with, is there a place of Holy Scripture to be found, in which it is declared that *any* individual man, or *any* set or class of individuals, after death, received further spiritual enlightenment, and, therefore, necessarily the power to advance in holiness? For if, to my mind, it is revealed that *even one single soul* did, after death, receive such further enlightenment, it is more than conceivable, since GOD is just and no "respector of persons," that *other* souls also may be likewise benefited beyond the veil. Now here are two texts, which assert

a very suggestive fact, from which we may infer a good deal :¹

“And these all (i.e., the roll of Old Testament saints and martyrs, “of whom the world was not worthy”), having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: GOD having provided some better thing for us, that they *without us* should not be *made perfect*.” (*Heb. xi. 39, 40.*)

From this passage it would appear that those Old Covenant saints and martyrs, who died before the LORD'S first advent, *did gain some accession of knowledge and grace* after death, that their “perfection” depended

¹ Here is Bishop Westcott's interpretation of the verses: “The reason of this failure of the fathers to ‘receive the promise,’ which men might think strange, lay in the far-reaching Providence—Foresight—of GOD. It was His purpose that the final consummation should be for all together, as indeed it is of all, in CHRIST; so that no one part of the Body can, if we realize the meaning of the figure, gain its fulfilment independently. The consummation of all the Saints therefore followed upon the completion of CHRIST'S work, the accomplishment by Him of the destiny of man, though fallen. So far, then, God foresaw in the order of His great counsel in our case (*concerning us*) something better than the fathers experienced: for we have actually seen in part that towards which they strained. (*S. Matt. xiii. 17; 1 S. Peter i. 12.*) . . . At the same time there is the thought that God has looked further, even beyond our age of trial, to the end. Even we, who have ‘been taught the truth as it is in JESUS,’ even we have only ‘seen *in part*’ what the fathers never saw at all. ‘For now we see in a mirror darkly (Greek. *In a riddle*); but then face to face: now I know *in part*: but then shall I know fully, even as also I shall have been known fully.’ (*1 Cor. xiii. 12.*) I imagine that this observation may be a just one. The writer of this Epistle, addressing as he was, *Hebrews*, would naturally refer to the heroes and heroines of the *Jewish* hagiology. But would it, therefore, be safe to assume that he excluded from ‘perfection’ after death the *Gentile* world? Certainly, if S. Paul be the writer of the Epistle—S. Paul, ‘the Apostle of the Gentiles’—he would hardly be the most likely person to argue for exclusive privileges beyond the veil in favour of Jewish Saints only.”

upon a later generation. If, then, these particular worthies were capable, after death, of such an improvement in their condition, and were sensible of that improvement, why, on the face of it, should it be thought incredible that hosts of other souls, with no more or much less light on earth than these Jewish

* The passage, Heb. xii. 22, 23, "Ye are come . . . to the spirits of just men made perfect," has been totally isolated from the rest of the Epistle, and quoted as directly contradicting the doctrine of progress after death. But surely 'the spirits made perfect' must be the same as are mentioned in the above passage, Heb. xi. 40. It would seem barely possible to read this latter passage, occurring after an interval of but a few verses, apart and distinct from the former passage. Indeed the idea of 'perfection' is quite a characteristic of the whole Epistle: noun, adjective, and verb signifying 'perfection,' 'perfect,' and 'making perfect' are all found in it. The recurrence of these terms certainly suggests a connection of thought running through the entire letter. Under these circumstances, the separation of one passage from its context would suspend that connection. "What does he (the writer of the Epistle) mean by the words, '*not made perfect*?' (xi. 40). In the first of these two passages (xii. 22, 23) he has spoken of 'spirits of just men *made perfect*.' In both cases he is referring to the departed. Is he, then, contradicting himself? Not at all. He is simply teaching that the perfecting of the Intermediate-life is a perfecting which concerns only the *spirits* of men—a perfecting of character and nature. There is another perfecting which will come only with the Resurrection—the re-clothing of man with an immortal body. The perfecting of the spirit takes place in the Hades-life; while that of the body does not." From *Our Life after Death*, by Rev. A. Chambers, pp. 55, 56. This suggestion seems to find support in a note of Bishop Westcott on x. 40. "The perfection," he says, "of the individual Christian must in its fullest sense involve the perfection of the Christian Society. The 'perfection' which CHRIST has gained for humanity in His person (ii. 10; v. 9; vii. 28; x. 1, 14) must be appropriated by every member of CHRIST. In part this end has been reached by the old Saints in some degree, in virtue of CHRIST's exaltation (c. xii. 23), but in part it waits for the final triumph of the SAVIOUR, when all that we sum up in confessing the truth of 'the resurrection of the body' is fulfilled."

Ancients possessed, should also beyond the veil undergo a transformation in their spiritual status, when they too, not having "received the promise," with us, in the revelation of JESUS CHRIST, discover "some better thing"?

In the light of this passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us look at the crucial passage, Phil. i. 6: "Being *confident*"—this is a strong word: here is no mere *hope*—"of this very thing, that He, which began"—S. Paul refers to a definite point in their souls' history, and a definite act of GOD—"a good work *in you will perfect it*"—the Greek verb is not the simple, but a compound form, the preposition prefixed signifying *something additional*—"until the day of Jesus Christ." Note, first, that S. Paul's *terminus ad quem* is not the day of their deaths, but "the day of JESUS CHRIST." Until that consummation of all things, this work once for all initiated by GOD, is to be fully "perfected." Note, secondly, that GOD'S work here spoken of is a work "*in you*," an *internal* operation of grace. A mere upward impulse in the direction of better things, which, in the earth-life, was never matured into outward action, may be included in the scope of the Apostle's confidence.

"Ah! let us hope that to our praise
 Good GOD not only reckons
 The moments when we tread His ways,
 But when the spirit beckons,—
 That some slight good is also wrought
 Beyond self-satisfaction,
 When we are simply good in thought,
 Howe'er we fail in action."¹

Side by side with the above text, let us bear in mind the parallel passage, 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, "Waiting for the

¹ J. R. Lowell. "*Longing*."

revelation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST : Who shall also *confirm you unto the end* (not merely as far as the day of death) that ye may be *unreproveable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Here are two utterances of S. Paul, both of which contemplate GOD'S operations of grace in souls being developed right up to the hour of the return of CHRIST to judgment.

Here is another hint, "And there was given them¹ to each one a *white robe* ; and it was said unto them, that they should *rest yet for a little time*, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled." (*Rev.* vi. 11.) Note here that the white robes were not given either at death, though that death in their cases was the death of martyrdom, or at the end of time, but *while they rested*, in the expectant state, "underneath the altar."

Nor can I pass over without mention such words of the Master Himself as "Occupy"—in the original Greek, as translated in the Revised Version, *Trade ye herewith— "till I come."* (*S. Luke* xix. 13.) "Let them both *grow up* together until the harvest . . . and the harvest is *the end of the world.*" (*S. Matt.* xiii. 30, 39.) "Howbeit that which ye have, hold fast *till I come.* And he that overcometh, and he *that keepeth my works unto the end*, to him will I give authority over the nations." (*Rev.* ii. 25, 26.) Here we have at least suggestions, on the highest of all authorities, that a soul's career can only be appraised at its true value, as it appears completed

¹ The reference is to the souls of the Martyrs "underneath the altar." This last expression is equivalent to the Jewish name for the Intermediate State, "under the Throne of Glory." The Jews always regarded the altar as the immediate seat of the Divine Majesty.

upon the Day of Judgment, not as it appears incomplete at the hour of death. Indeed, when we consider that the penitent thief was expressly promised by our LORD that "To-day"—the position of the Greek word is emphatic—he should be with Him "in Paradise;" and further, that S. Paul declares, "We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *at home with the Lord*" (2 Cor. v. 8); we are bound to conclude that "in Paradise," when "absent from the body" souls are, in a very real sense, "with the LORD;" that spirits in a disembodied condition enjoy a special nearness to JESUS. How, then, is it possible for any Christian to suppose that, beyond the veil, our LORD ceases to be drawing souls closer and closer to Himself, by virtue of the magnetism of His having been "lifted up"? Wherever CHRIST is—and, apparently, beyond the veil He is present after some more immediate fashion, of which we have no experience as yet—there *must* be this attraction of souls to Him; and the being attracted to Him *must* mean increase of holiness.

To the present writer it seems that the following words could hardly have been used, without a positive abuse of language, if the brief span of our earth-lives were in reality the termination of GOD'S activity in the souls of men: "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the LORD, *are transformed* (the Greek word here used is the word employed in the accounts of the Transfiguration in S. Matthew xvii. 2; S. Mark ix. 2) into the same image *from glory to glory*, even as from the LORD the Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) The process of transformation spoken of by S. Paul is certainly a gradual, not an instantaneous process—the

Greek verb is in the present tense—and a process already begun here and now. But surely an expression like "*from glory to glory*" can scarcely be satisfied by any or all of the experiences of mere Time.

It would be possible, of course, to cite a catena of passages from the Fathers in support of this view of the Intermediate State of progress and sanctification. Tertullian, Lactantius, Origen, S. Hilary, S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, are all explicit enough upon the point. Justin Martyr¹ goes so far as to say, "As for those who even say, that their souls instantaneously at death are taken up to heaven, consider them not Christians, or even Jews." I will content myself, however, with quoting a single passage from the pen of one, whose name is a name to conjure with amongst those, who might be prejudiced against my contention, by reason of inveterate bias in the opposite direction. "*God forbid,*" Martin Luther once wrote, "*that I should limit the time of acquiring faith to the present life!* In the depths of the Divine mercy, there may be opportunity to win it *in the future state.*"²

But, it may be admitted, possibly there may be growth in grace after death for the 'justified,' but you have hinted at 'salvation' beyond the grave, presumably for those not 'saved' before death. Yes, I reply, it is no less a thing than 'salvation,' that I contend is possible, at any rate for some, in the Intermediate State. For what would you have me think? I live in the midst of a world of men and women, and little children, every soul of them my brother and my sister in the flesh, all redeemed by the

¹ Just. Martyr. *Dial.*

² Luther. Letter to Hansen von Rechenberg, 1522.

selfsame blood of GOD Incarnate. I believe that there is "but one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism," as well as "one GOD and Father of us all." The creed of Catholic Christians, I am heartily convinced, is the only creed that is absolute truth, to the exclusion of all other creeds, as either false, or, at least, inadequate. Now, not to mention the heathen, of whom I know little beyond my boyish recollections in India, I find masses of my own countrymen and countrywomen either utterly indifferent to, or else antagonistic to, this creed of mine; while still larger masses of them apparently seem to possess, for practical purposes, no creed at all. I am given to understand that to-day in England, if there be any one faith capable of embracing the nation, that faith is what is described as "Undenominationalism." What are the precise tenets, if any, of this altogether novel *fin de siècle* system of theology, I have not yet been able to discover; only I am assured it is a cult of which neither I nor my fathers have had any previous experience. Certainly the historical predecessors of its most zealous propagandists at the present moment were *anything but* "Undenominationalists." And yet, in the teeth of the facts, I am confronted with such a pronouncement as this of S. Paul: "We have our hope set on the living GOD, Who is the SAVIOUR of *all men*, specially"—and only "specially"—"of them that believe." Moreover, I am bound to confess, with infinite shame, that many who know not the Faith as I have been privileged to know it, are better men to-day than I am. What, then, am I to say, to think? I can only think and say that these multitudes, not favoured as I am favoured, must somewhere else, if not here, have their chance of either

accepting or rejecting the one Faith, since it is impossible to believe GOD a just GOD, if He is to condemn eternally souls by the millions, who have never, with *all* the facts before them, had an opportunity of choosing for themselves between belief and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, the light and the darkness. The LORD Himself, I can never forget, pleaded for His very executioners: "FATHER, forgive them, for *they know not* what they do:" and I read that S. Peter, the Prince of His Apostles, while speaking in severe terms to his compatriots, the Jews, concerning the deliverance up by them and denial of JESUS "before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release Him," added the apologetic words, "And now, brethren, I wot that *in ignorance* ye did it, as did also your rulers." (*Acts* iii. 17.)

I note, however, that the same S. Peter lays this down as a postulate: "And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name (except that of JESUS) under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (*Acts* iv. 12.) Since, then, these hosts of people, of whom we are now thinking, live and die in complete or partial "ignorance" of the real significance of that Most Holy Name, I, for one, am driven to conclude, that elsewhere, if not on earth, they will receive sufficient enlightenment to render a deliberate rejection by them of the CHRIST a *damnum*, the loss of the most valuable thing they could have received. "The way of return to GOD is closed against no one who does not close it against himself; therefore, those who have not yet closed it against themselves, in that the means of salvation, the redemption of CHRIST, has not been yet offered to them, will indisputably hereafter, when beyond the limits of this earthly life, be placed in a

condition to enter upon the way of return to GOD, if they choose."¹ Surely this witness, the continental theologian, Julius Müller, is true.

You perhaps object, This is mere supposition ; what Scriptural evidence have you to point to ? Let us look at two texts :

"That in the Name of JESUS *every* knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] on earth, and [things]² *under the earth* (margin of R.V., '*things of the world below*'; Vulgate reads *Infernorum*), and that *every* tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER." (*Phil.* ii. 10, 11.)

"And *every* created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and *under the earth*, and on the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." (*Rev.* v. 13.)

¹ Clarke's For. Theol. Library, vol. ii. p. 483.

² "We must at least think of him as declaring that the sovereignty of the Redeemer would be acknowledged in that unseen world, where are the souls alike of the righteous and the sinners, each in his appointed place. The only other interpretation, which is even plausible, that which identifies 'the things under the earth' with demons or evil spirits, is excluded (1) by the fact that the language of S. Paul represents the latter as carrying on their warfare in quite another region (*Ephes* ii. 2, vi. 12); and (2) that it is altogether inapplicable to the parallel classification in *Rev.* v. 3: 'No one in heaven, nor on the earth, nor *under the earth*, could take the books, and look therein.'" Plumptre, *Spirits in Prison*, p. 110.

Alford makes no question that the dead are meant, and reckons the reference to "devils" one of "various erroneous interpretations." Moreover, this adoration of the enthroned SAVIOUR is spoken of as an event *in the future*. *Already* "the devils also believe, and shudder." (*S. James* ii. 19.) With regard to the contrary interpretation of *Rev.* v. 13, see Note at the end of this chapter.

Here are prophecies evidently of the *general* adoration of the LORD CHRIST by *all* GOD'S creatures, in the *three* spheres of being, viz., on earth, under the earth—that is, in Hades—and in the Heaven of Heavens. It is, let us note, *every* knee that shall bow, it is *every* voice that shall recite the universal creed, and swell the chorus of the universal doxology. How, then, shall the vast majority of mankind, who departed this life in either total or partial ignorance of the Godhead of JESUS, *under the earth* worship Him as Divine, unless, *in the meanwhile*, they shall have learnt Who and What He is?

But is there any direct statement in the New Testament which encourages the hope that the Gospel has ever been preached to the dead? Yes, there is certainly one *locus classicus*, which states in black and white, that there is a Gospel of the dead. This crucial passage has been so misunderstood, owing to the inaccuracies of the translation of the Greek original in our Authorized Version, that, in order to make my contention the clearer, I place side by side the unamended text with that of the Revised Version, italicising the differences:—

Authorized Version.

"For CHRIST also hath once suffered for sins, the *just* for the *unjust*, that He might bring us to GOD, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened *by the Spirit*: By which He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which *sometime* were disobedient, when *once* the longsuffering of GOD waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." (1 S. Peter iii. 18, 19, 20.)

Revised Version.

"*Because* CHRIST also suffered for sins once, the *righteous* for the *unrighteous*, that He might bring us to GOD; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened *in the spirit*; *in* which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which *aforetime* were disobedient, when the long-suffering of GOD waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." (1 S. Peter iii. 18, 19, 20.)

"For *for this cause* was the Gospel preached *also to them that are dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 S. Peter iv. 6.)

"For *unto this end* was the Gospel preached *even to the dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 S. Peter iv. 6.)

What are the differences, that matter much? In the first passage, permit me to draw attention to the rendering of the Authorized Version, "*quickened by the Spirit.*" This mistranslation would lead the ordinary reader to suppose there was some reference to *the Holy Ghost*. In point of fact, there is none whatever, there being no definite article in the Greek. "There is no reference in the Greek such as the Authorized Version implies, to the action of the HOLY SPIRIT, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, but simply an antithesis between *the lower* and *higher* parts of CHRIST'S *human nature*, between His *flesh* and His *spirit*. . . . He (CHRIST) was put to death in the flesh, but, in that He died, the just for the unjust, not because He deserved death, but simply for well-doing, His death was an immediate cause of good, for His *human spirit*, when *severed from the flesh*, acquired new powers of activity and usefulness, and went forth into another sphere to bear the message of glad tidings to the departed spirits of men, who were there detained."¹ We have here the simple statement that CHRIST'S *soul*, departing out of the body like any other soul, descended to Hades, and there preached to the souls "in keeping." The Vulgate reading brings this out clearly enough: "*Christus . . . mortificatus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu. In quo et his, qui in carcere erant, spiritibus veniens praedi-*

¹ Luckock. *The Intermediate State*, pp. 139, 140.

cavit." Notice that the identical Latin word '*spiritus*' is applied both to CHRIST and to the dead "in keeping." With regard to the second passage, let it be noted how the translators of the Authorized Version, apparently afraid of the bald expression of the original, "even to [the] dead," softened down the two words of the Greek to no less than six English words, "*also to them that are dead.*" There is here again no definite article, so that these "dead" are as indefinite a quantity as can be imagined. In this case you have no class of departed souls specialized, but, "the Gospel was preached even to dead persons" in the most general and broadest sense of the word. The recognition by modern scholarship, that there is no definite article before "spirit" in iii. 18, introducing, as it would, if there, the idea of the HOLY GHOST, effectually disposes of any importation, like that by Bishop Pearson, of the thought of the potentiality of CHRIST'S Godhead, in place of the reference to CHRIST'S mere human soul, (*spiritu*) as opposed to His human flesh (*carne*).

The fact that these passages referred to the historical descent of CHRIST into Hades, and to His actual preaching to the literally dead, was never questioned until the days of S. Augustine. Consequently there is no doubt whatever about the opinion of our own Church on the subject. Our present Third Article of Religion merely asserts the fact of CHRIST'S descent into Hades, but, be it observed, the corresponding Article of 1553, (most unfortunately abbreviated under Queen Elizabeth), ran as follows:

"As CHRIST died and was buried for us, so also it is to be believed that He went down into hell. For the body lay in the Sepulchre until the resurrection: but

His ghost, departing from Him, was with the ghosts, that were in prison or in hell, and did preach to the same, as the place of S. Peter doth testify."

This circumstance shews clearly enough that the Reformers raised no question about S. Peter's being understood to refer to the historical descent into Hades, and its object. The unlucky erasure was due to fierce controversies at the date of its being made. Are we, then, to assume that the English Church, by thus cutting the Article down, has changed her mind about the literal interpretation of S. Peter's words? Most certainly not. She is absolutely committed to the historical descent and its purpose, by the fact (1) that the passage, 1 S. Peter iii. 17 and following verses, is appointed for the Epistle on Easter Even, the day set apart for the commemoration of the repose of CHRIST'S soul in Paradise, and (2) that, both in the Old and the New Lectionary, the chapter, Zechariah ix., is selected for the First Lesson at Matins on the same occasion. This chapter contains the verses (11 and 12): "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant *I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit* wherein is no water. Turn you to the stronghold, *ye prisoners of hope*: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Thus the results of modern scholarship and the witness of holy Church are agreed as to the acceptance of the literal fact of CHRIST'S going down to the place of departed spirits and "preaching of the Gospel" to them there. For, be it noted, the passage, 1 S. Peter iii. 18, 19, 20, *does not stand alone*: it is reinforced by the subsequent verse, 1 S. Peter iv. 6, where the English words, "the Gospel was preached," represent the Greek term usually employed to signify "preaching the Gospel:" the term

exactly transcribed into English by our term "evangelize."

Now, then, follows the question, Why, in 1 S. Peter iii. 20, was the Gospel of the dead preached to a class, specially selected for mention here, viz., the disobedient in Noah's time? For what reason does S. Peter single out those Antediluvians? I prefer to answer this question in the words of others more capable than myself of dealing with it. "It may have been that his (S. Peter's) thoughts were turned instinctively to these, by the figure, which he had in his mind, and which he used in the very same sentence, showing that the waters of the flood, on which the ark floated in safety, were the type of Baptism, by which men are brought into the true ark of CHRIST'S Church. Possibly it was the association of these ideas alone, which suggested the mention of this single class."¹ "Our LORD preached to the *whole class of spirits* in prison, of all times and races; and then, to magnify the bounty of this act, S. Peter instances a particular group of them, who were *the most disobedient criminals of any*, and whose case suggested a useful application. He has a reason for using the word '*disobedient*.' It would not describe *all* sinners, but those who had heard and been convinced by the Word of GOD, but refused to accept it. This was the case with those, to whom Noah preached (2 S. Peter ii. 5), and, in spite of their disobedience, CHRIST, after His innocent and sacrificial death, went in spirit and preached the Gospel to them. . . . S. Clement² of Alexandria, who derives

¹ Luckock. *The Intermediate State*, pp. 147, 148.

² S. Clement became head of the Catechetical School at Alexandria about A.D. 202. He says (*Stromat.* vi.), that the best of the disciples of CHRIST necessarily imitated their Master

the notion from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, gives his belief that *the Apostles also*, when they died, preached to those who had died before them; and though there is little that throws light on our occupation in the Intermediate State, it can hardly be pronounced impossible for some spirits to be allowed to follow CHRIST'S example there by preaching to spirits in prison."¹

To the present writer it would appear incredible

in Hades, as on earth, and therefore, like our LORD Himself, preached to the spirits in keeping. The passage from *The Shepherd of Hermas*, on which he bases his belief, is as follows: "And I said, 'Why, then, Sir, did these forty stones also ascend with them out of the deep, having already received that seal?' ('That seal,' the writer had explained, 'is the water of Baptism.') He answered, 'Because these apostles and teachers, who preached the Name of the SON of GOD, dying after they had received His faith and power, preached to them who were dead before; and they gave this seal to them.'" (Bk. III. *Similitude* ix. 16). Who was this 'Hermas,' and when did he live? There was a Hermas at Rome, to whom S. Paul sent a greeting. (*Rom.* xvi. 14). Origen, Tertullian, S. Irenæus, Eusebius say, or imply, that this same Hermas wrote *The Shepherd*. Others say its author was one Hermas, of the following century, brother to Pope Pius I. Archbishop Wake thinks it was the former. "Another production," writes Archdeacon Cheetham, "of the Roman Church is the curious work of Hermas which bears the name of *The Shepherd*. He writes as a contemporary of Clement (i.e., Clement *Romanus circa* 95, A.D.), but the writer of the Muratorian Fragment describes him as the brother of Bishop Pius (142-157?). There is, however, nothing in the book incompatible with the earlier date. . . . It evidently made a great impression on the Church, for such men as Irenæus and the Alexandrian Clement quote it as Scripture or revelation, and a fresco in a Neapolitan catacomb represents the tower-building which Hermas describes." (*Church History. Early Period.* pp. 82, 83.) Even supposing, then, we are obliged to accept the later date as that of *The Shepherd of Hermas*, evidently the tradition that Apostles and others preached, like CHRIST, to the souls of the dead, comes down to us from a very hoary antiquity.

¹ Prof. A. J. Mason in *New Testament Commentary*, edited by Bishop Ellicott, *in loc.*

that it should be otherwise. The spirit of a Paul, of a Francis of Assissi, of a Wycliffe, of a Wesley, could not but preach, wherever there were souls to be found not yet "saved through CHRIST for ever." With the plain facts staring me in the face, that "the world" has *not* been evangelized, even after nineteen centuries of the Christian era, here and now; and further, that of those nominally evangelized, multitudes have the most invertebrate, if not actually false, conceptions of Christian doctrine and discipline presented to them for their acceptance, I am compelled to presume that the mission of the Church is not limited to mere Time. Indeed, men and women of many creeds have conceived of the sphere of the influence of the good being extended beyond the veil of sense. For instance, the American poet-philosopher, James Russell Lowell, in his *Elegy on the death of Dr. Channing*, thus addresses the departed spirit of that worthy :—

"Thou art not idle : in thy higher sphere
Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks,
And strength to perfect what it dreamed of here
Is all the crown and glory that it asks.

"For sure in Heaven's wide chambers there is room
For love and pity, and for helpful deeds;
Else were our summons thither but a doom
To life more vain than this in clayey weeds."

But one more suggestion as to why these Antediluvians are specially alluded to as recipients of the Gospel of the dead, and I have done. "Still can we conjecture, how is it that this generation of spirits only are mentioned? May it not be for some reason like this, that they were *the first in point of time* to be imprisoned? The SON of GOD went to them first because they, or

the bulk of them, had waited for Him the longest. We know nothing respecting the order of vast, immeasurable Hades—GOD has hidden it from us ; only we know that, being part of the realm or universe of GOD, it is ordered by Him, and so there might be an order in the preaching of JESUS to them. Some might receive it from Him, and some from those that come after Him. For of each generation of men, who passed into the unseen state between Noah's time and our LORD'S, the merest infinitesimal fraction could have known anything respecting CHRIST crucified. Was such knowledge made up to them by angelic agency? That would be contrary to the analogy of all GOD'S dealings in the employment of angels. If GOD employed the spirits of just men made perfect to proclaim this knowledge to them, that would be in accordance with all His dealings in making CHRIST crucified known to men. We must remember that this is not a matter of conjecture, but, to a certain extent, of analogy. The same reason why GOD should allow a message of mercy to reach those who perished in their sins in the time of Noah, would permit a similar message of mercy to reach those who perished in their sins between the times of Noah and CHRIST; and between the time of CHRIST to the present time, to those who have not had CHRIST preached to them. The instruments, by which GOD has effected this He has not revealed to us, but that He has such instruments, I suppose no one would have the hardihood to deny."¹

But, whatever be the explanation of the special mention of the Antediluvians in 1 S. Peter iii. 18-20, I

¹ Prebendary Sadler. *New Testament Commentary*. On 1 S. Peter iii. 20.

would again desire to emphasize the fact that that passage is *not an isolated passage*: it does not stand alone. There follows the *general* statement of 1 S. Peter iv. 6, "For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to [the] dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to GOD in the spirit." It is important to focus attention upon this second passage, because, strange to say, neither Bishop Horsley, in his celebrated sermon on 1 S. Peter iii. 19 (*Works*. Vol. ii. Sermon 20), nor Bishop Harold Browne (*On the Thirty-nine Articles*), makes the remotest allusion to its existence. Here, there being, as has been remarked before, no definite article in the Greek prefixed to 'dead,' you have an evangelization of the departed in the broadest and most indefinite terms, no particular individual or class or type being mentioned. So long, then, as you cannot get rid of this text, so long men will and must cherish a hope that, for some, at any rate, there is a chance of salvation beyond the grave. For where or when is CHRIST'S Gospel preached regarded as anything less than the offer of salvation to such as hear it preached?

I feel that I cannot better conclude the argument on this head than by quoting the closing remarks of Dean Alford, in his standard Commentary, on 1 S. Peter iii. 18, 19, 20: "With the great majority of Commentators, ancient and modern, I understand these words to say that our LORD, in His disembodied state, did go to the place of detention of departed spirits, and did there announce His work of redemption—preach salvation, in fact—to the disembodied spirits of those who refused to obey the voice of GOD, when the judgment of the flood was hanging over them. Why these, rather than others,

are mentioned—whether merely as a sample of the like gracious work on others, or for some special reason unimaginable by us, we cannot say. It is ours to deal with the plain words of Scripture, and to accept its revelations as far as vouchsafed to us. And they are vouchsafed to us to the utmost limit of legitimate inference from revealed facts. That inference every intelligent reader will draw from the fact here announced; it is not Purgatory, it is not universal restitution, but it is one which throws blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of the Divine justice: the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the lapse which has incurred it. And as we cannot say to what other cases this (the Greek word for '*Preaching*') may have applied, so it would be presumption in us to limit its occurrence or its efficacy. The reason of mentioning here these sinners, above other sinners, appears to be their connection with the type of Baptism which follows. If so, who shall say that the blessed act was confined to them?"

Now, to sum up the somewhat intricate and prolonged arguments of this chapter. At what conclusion must I perforce arrive after allowing their due weight to each and all of the following considerations? (1) CHRIST is revealed to be the SAVIOUR of *the world*, and only "*specially* of them that believe," the *fideles* of the Vulgate rendering. (2) There is available for man no other possible salvation save that only in the Name of JESUS. But in point of fact, now as in the past, the Most Holy Name of JESUS is utterly unknown to millions upon millions of non-Christian peoples; and, practically, is all but unknown, through no fault of their own, to masses of the population of even a professedly Christian

country like England. (4) Not a single soul can attain to the Beatific Vision without the acquirement of an essential "holiness." (5) Therefore we find that "the good work" of GOD "in" souls, begun on earth indeed, is represented in the New Testament as being made "perfect," not at death, but "until the day of JESUS CHRIST." (6) It is revealed that our LORD's human spirit preached the Gospel not only "even to [the] dead" in general, but specifically to the Antediluvians, specimens of the *worst possible* class of offenders, who obstinately refused, in their earth-lives, to listen to the warnings of "Noah, a preacher of righteousness," and were, therefore "aforetime disobedient." (7) The literal interpretation of those two passages from S. Peter's First Epistle, bearing upon the Gospel of the dead, was not called in question until S. Augustine's day, and is accepted by our own Church officially. Additional force is imparted to this consideration by the recent discovery of a fragment of the apocryphal "Gospel of Peter," which may be dated "about¹ A.D. 165." In chapter ix. of the text of this fragment occurs the following remarkable passage: "They see three men coming forth from the tomb, two of them supporting the other, and a cross following them; and the heads of the two reached to heaven: but that of Him, Who was led by them, overpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from the heavens, saying, *Thou didst preach to them that sleep*: and a response was heard from the cross, *Yea*." (8) In the prophecy of the final adoration of the Lamb by "every creature," the "inhabitants of the lower world" are included in the chorus of worshippers.

To what conclusion, I repeat, must I come after giving

¹ See Swete, *Gospel of Peter*, p. xliv.

due weight to all these considerations? GOD is just, as well as very pitiful. The threats of Holy Scripture are universally levelled against such as have known the right way, and refused to walk therein. The neglect of privilege was, according to CHRIST, the condemnation of the Jews of His day. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My FATHER." (*S. John* xv. 22, 24.) And again, "This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for *their works were evil*." (*S. John* iii. 19.) Yes, it is a *moral* offence after all—a bias towards evil in practice: "they *loved* the darkness." Everywhere the *will* is at fault, when the soul is imperilled. But these poor souls in their millions, the heathen with their idols of wood and stone, with the abominations of their ancestral savagery, steeped from their youth up in the orgies and turpitudes of undiluted barbarism, LORD GOD of Pity in mercy's sweet cause pierced to the heart's heart, if not here—through the callousness of Christians who prize their gold and their ease above the value of undying souls—brought, one by one, to kneel at Thy nail-pierced feet,—if not here, then beyond the veil of sense, Thou wilt grant *them* to know Thee, and the power of Thy Resurrection! These other millions, in so-called Christian lands, whose Gospel—if they have a Gospel—is a mutilated Gospel, perchance a Gospel of despair, LORD GOD of Pity, if in this world they never have an opportunity of seeing Thee as Thou art, and so—if *they can*!—of rejecting Thee,—if not here,

then across the grave and gate of death they *will* look to Thee, some of them at least, and looking, live! It was of Thyself, LORD GOD of Pity, that it was written of old time, "Behold My Servant Whom I have chosen, My Beloved in Whom My Soul is well pleased. . . . A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, *till*"—and not until that final consummation of all things—" *till* He send forth *judgment* unto victory."

The Author is indebted to the Rev. Cyril Bickersteth, M.A., of the Community of the Resurrection, for the following very suggestive note on the interpretation of Rev. v. 13. (See page 127.)

Though there is no question that these words may be fairly quoted as additional proof that the souls in Hades are capable of joining in the adoration of the Lamb, Alford and William Lee (*Speaker's Commentary*) somewhat arbitrarily exclude an interpretation for which there is some ancient authority, and which seems to the undersigned a more reasonable and wider application of the words. Cornelius à Lapide, quoting Rupert and S. Gregory, says:—"Again there are the devils and the damned who are compelled to acknowledge and worship GOD and CHRIST, not of their own accord, but under compulsion." The present writer has seen in a Roman Catechism the question and answer, "What is the employment of the devils in hell?" "They roar, they curse, they blaspheme GOD for ever and ever."

It is not only terrible but inconceivable that any of the creatures He has made should remain in eternal rebellion against the Creator, and the words of the text suggest that evil spirits and lost souls may come at last to acquiesce in their eternal loss and acknowledge the justice of the awful sentence passed upon them. This view is expressed by E. H. Bickersteth (Bishop of Exeter), in "*Yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*" End of Book XI.

"For ever lost; This is the second death;
Meet end for me who whispered in the ear
Of fragile man, 'Ye shall not surely die.'

So flattering falsehood spake to me. Man fell,
 And falling as I knew too well, he died.
 The Lord is righteous ; I have sinned and die,
 Lost, lost ; nor could I crave it otherwise.
 What would I otherwise ? Escape from chains ?
 Were not we loosed from prison, I and mine,
 And only madly heaped upon ourselves
 Fresh torment by fresh crime ? Nay, in our death,
 Eternal Justice hath alone fulfilled
 The equal sentence of eternal love.

* * * * *

Woe, woe, immedicable woe for those
 Whose hopeless ruin is their only hope,
 And hell their solitary resting-place.
 Lost, lost ; our doom is irreversible ;
 Power, justice, mercy, love, have sealed us here.
 ' Glory to God, Who sitteth on the Throne,
 And to the Lamb for ever and for ever ! '
 The voice was hush'd a moment ; then a deep
 Low murmur, like a hoarse resounding surge,
 Rose from the universal lake of fire ;
 No tongue was mute, no damned spirit but swell'd
 That multitudinous tide of awful praise,
 ' Glory to God, Who sitteth on the Throne,
 And to the Lamb for ever and for ever. '

C.B.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE ROMISH DOCTRINE CONCERNING PURGATORY."

THEN you maintain the Papal theory of Purgatory, condemned in the Twenty-second Article of Religion, as "a fond thing, vainly invented, and founded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of GOD?" No, I reply; nothing of the kind. I venture to think, on the whole, that the loose bandying about of the charge of Romanism against all and sundry is one of the worst dishonesties of British religious controversy. The "No Popery" cry fairly seems to have been an inveterate habit with our own countrymen and countrywomen of every generation since the Reformation. At Falmouth, in 1745, John Wesley, for instance, was hooted for a Papist and a Jacobite! I call this incessantly recurring accusation of Romeward tendencies a "dishonesty," because in many cases of its allegation, the men, who so hurl it about them at random, absolutely decline, before uttering it, to inform themselves as to what "Popery" actually inculcates; and so whether the particular doctrine impugned *does* really coincide in all respects with the special tenets of the Latin Communion,—*special*, as distinguished from the tenets of the whole Catholic Church throughout the world—not only in the West—with which the English Church professes fellowship and substantial agreement. Now you can no more ignore facts in theological than in any other species of controversy. Therefore, before rushing at too hasty conclusions, it would be as well for

us to make quite sure what Article XXII. says, and what it does not say. The best mode of getting at what we want to know is to compare the present wording of the Article in question with the wording of its predecessor. I italicise the differences.

ARTICLE XXIII. OF 1553.

Scholasticorum doctrina de Purgatorio . . . res est futilis.
The doctrine of *Scholausth-oures* concerning Purgatorie . . . is a fonde thing.

PRESENT ARTICLE XXII.

Doctrina Romanensium de Purgatorio . . . res est futilis.
The *Romish* doctrine concerning Purgatory . . . is a fond thing.

In these two Articles two virtually distinct doctrines are spoken of; and, let it be noted, that *now* what is condemned is the “*Romish*” doctrine, a present, *popular* tradition, and not the *official* teaching of Doctors of theology. “The words ‘*Romanenses*’ and ‘*Romanistae*’ were already used as far back as 1520 by Luther and Ulrich von Hutten, to designate *the extreme mediæval party*.”¹ We have, then, the clearest possible right, when airily charged with “Popery,” in asserting our belief in progress and sanctification after death, to point to the historical and undeniable fact, that our Twenty-second Article of Religion is levelled against mere *current superstitions*.² The Council of Trent, the canons of

¹ Hardwick, p. 410.

² The following words are worth recalling, as being those of a man capable of forming a calm and independent judgment upon this, as upon other, matters of controversy: “Nothing, I think, can be clearer than that the Article does *not* condemn *all* doctrine that may be called a doctrine of Purgatory. . . . ‘Purgatory’ is not a word I should myself spontaneously adopt, because it is associated with Roman theories about the future state, for which I see no foundation. But the idea of purgation, of cleansing as by fire, seems to me inseparable from what the Bible teaches us of the Divine chastisements; and, though little is directly said respecting the future state, it seems to me

which Article XXII. cannot possibly have in view, since that Synod, at the period of the re-publication of our Article, had not yet expressed its opinion concerning the matters referred to therein, takes a very moderate line upon the subject of Purgatory. For here is an extract from the decree of Trent with respect to Purgatory, promulgated on December 4th, 1563, nearly a year after our Article was re-issued with the modifications mentioned above. "Since the Catholic Church . . . has taught that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there *detained* are benefited by the prayers of the Faithful, but especially by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar; the Sacred Synod enjoins upon Bishops that they should diligently provide for the wholesome (*sanam*) doctrine concerning Purgatory, handed down by the holy Fathers and sacred Councils, being believed by the Faithful in CHRIST, held, taught, and everywhere preached. But among the uneducated masses, let the more difficult and more subtle questions, and those, which do not make for edification, and out of which, for the most part, results no increase of piety, be withdrawn from popular discourses. . . . But those things, which have a tendency towards a *species of curiosity or superstition, or which savour of filthy lucre*, let them prohibit, as *scandals and causes of stumbling* to the Faithful." ¹

incredible that the Divine chastisements should in this respect change their character when this visible life is ended. Neither now nor hereafter is there reason to suppose that they act mechanically as by an irresistible natural process, irrespectively of human will and acceptance. But I do not believe that God's purposes of love can ever cease towards us in any stage of our existence, or that they can accomplish themselves by our purification and perfection without painful processes." From *Life and Letters of F. J. A. Hort, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.*, vol. ii., p. 336, on Article XXII.

¹ *Conc. Trid. Sess. XXV. Decretum de Purgatorio.*

With the above temperate language agrees that of the Creed of Pope Pius IV., published in 1564, and now imposed upon all perverts from other Christian bodies: “I constantly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls *therein detained* are assisted by the prayers of the Faithful.” If the Church of Rome had gone no further than these statements go, I, for one, should have no quarrel with her, on this head, at any rate.

But, unfortunately, she has proceeded a long way in advance of this position. She has super-added the belief in Purgatorial *torments*, even *material* torments. “Besides,” declares the Catechism of the Council of Trent, “there is a Purgatorial *fire*, by which the souls of the Faithful (*piorum*) for a certain time having been tormented (*cruciatae*) are *expiated*, in order that an entrance may be able to be opened for them into the eternal fatherland, into which enters nothing defiled.” Here, in place of merely “*detained*” (cf. 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, “The spirits *in prison*,” or “*in keeping*”: Vulgate, “*qui in carcere erant spiritibus*,”) you have “*tormented*”; here is introduced the idea of a *penal fire*,¹ in the interval between death and

¹ “The judgment day was commonly regarded as a fiery ordeal, such as that spoken of by S. Paul in 1. Cor. iii. 13, through which all would have to pass, some passing through the fire unharmed, others suffering loss, but none failing who were built on the right foundation. This, however, is very different from Purgatory. Not only is it placed *at the judgment*, whereas the Purgatorial fire is regarded as cleansing those subjected to it *before* the final award is made at the Judgment Day, but, further, it is an ordeal through which *all*, the greatest saints and the greatest sinners, will have to pass; while Purgatory is not for the saints, who are supposed to pass straight to the Beatific Vision, nor for those who die out of a state of grace, whose final condemnation is assured, but only for those who die in grace, but in a state of imperfect sanctification. Nor does prayer for the

judgment. The moment Rome annexes to the Primitive and Catholic tradition concerning sanctification and progress for souls after death the *novel* fiction of *penal* cleansing, that moment the protest of our Twenty-second Article becomes a necessity and a duty. That the fiction *is* a novelty is asserted by no less a person than the martyr, Cardinal Fisher, who admits in his book against Luther, "Since it was *so late* before Purgatory was admitted into the Universal Church, who can be surprised that, *at the earlier period* of the Church, no use was made of Indulgences?"¹ At least let Rome be consistent with herself. She allows the Apocrypha, as we do not, to be canonical Scripture. Then, out of her own mouth she stands condemned, for staring her in the face are the beautiful words of the beautiful Book of Wisdom,² "But the souls of the righteous are in the hands of GOD, *and there shall no torment touch them*. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery; and their going from us to be utter destruction, *but they are in peace*."

Indeed, the thought of one's dead being tormented, not even yet at rest, after all the storms of life have spent their fury upon their heads, would cut one's very heart to the quick, if it were admissible. To disturb our confidence that "they are in peace" at last, is to attack a truth, which is a very part of ourselves, an article of the creed of *natural* religion. Could we smile again, we, whose hearts are buried in the grave of our beloved, if, with regard to *him*, to *her*, the sentiments of the following verses of Faber were conceivable by us?

departed by any means involve of necessity a belief in Purgatory."—Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, vol. ii. p. 545.

¹ Fisher, *Adv. Luther*, 18.

² iii. 1-3.

“In pains *beyond all earthly pains*,
Favourites of JESUS! there they lie
Letting the fire *wear out* their stains
And worshipping God's purity.

“See how *they bound* amid the fires,
While pain and love their spirits fill;
Then, with self-crucified desires,
Utter sweet murmurs, and lie still.”¹

Be it remembered that, after all, it is of *spirits* that we are thinking, when we think of the intermediate world of being. Is it not, then, an altogether too materialistic conception, this of *spirits* leaping and subsiding under the lash of what looks like physical torture? If there be any pain at all in the disembodied state, “with JESUS,” must it not be a quite supersensuous pain, the subtle, ineffable emotion of man's Godward instinct uttering itself when, for the first time, liberated from all creaturely restraint, the spasm of pure spirit gasping in an agony of yearning to become holier, liker GOD? Education, enlightening, growth in sanctity, an ever deepening penitence for sin, an ever intensifying love, aye, the very revelation to some of a Gospel unheard of or misunderstood in the earth-life left far behind—all this, and more, we can imagine, hope for, on behalf of the departed; but pain as *an expiation*, pain both physical and material, pain identical with the pain of the hell of the damned, save in mere duration, pain such as this, I, for one, cannot contemplate without a shiver of incredulity. It is not imaginable to me, that the Eternal CHRIST, Whose sphere of being, thinking, and doing is the sphere of all the Eternities, could remit to any soul the Eternal penalty of an Eternal Hell, and then require that soul to pass through another such hell

¹ Dr. Faber's Hymns, No. 56, *The Queen of Purgatory*.

differing from the former only as regards the length of its chastisements. To wipe out, in the case of any soul, the sentence of banishment to the great, great Hell, nevertheless to enforce the condemnation to a, by comparison, infinitely little hell—this would appear to me impossible to a generosity, that had once for all said to the suppliant debtor at its feet “who had not to pay,” never would possess the means to pay, “I forgave thee *all that debt*,” not for the sake of any deserving on the part of My petitioner, but simply—“because thou desiredst Me.” (*S. Matt.* xviii. 32.) As compared, then, with Faber’s verses quoted above, the following lines of another Christian poet, to my mind, breathe immeasurably more of the spirit of CHRIST’S Religion, reflect, immeasurably more accurately, the character of CHRIST’S self-manifestation :—

“ If pain be in that place of rest,
 With those who are in JESUS blest,
 It is not penal suffering sent
 By way of after-punishment.
 All that was penal JESUS bore,
 Away from us for evermore !
 It is the gentle, wholesome pain,
 That must in every soul remain,
 In which the faintest sinful stain
 Unpurged-out lingers ; to have less
 Would not be real happiness ;
 So long as that, which makes it stay,
 Has not been wholly purged away.”¹

For, of course, when we speak of our dead as “resting” in “*cemeteries*,” that is, places of sleeping, it is not thereby implied, that the life of the *soul* after death is passed under a trance, in the absolute indolence of suspended animation. “Our friend Lazarus,” said

¹ From Dr. Monsell’s *Near Home at Last*.

the Master to His perplexed disciples, “*sleepeth* ; but I
to *awake him out of sleep*.” (S. John xi. 11.) But
it is the *body*, not *the spirit*, that is described as “sleep-
ing,” “at rest.”

“ For a while *the tired body*
Lies with feet towards the morn ;
Till the last and brightest Easter
day be born.

“ But *the soul* in contemplation
Utters earnest prayer and strong,
Bursting at the Resurrection
into song.”

No doubt, however, as contrasted with the turmoil of the
state of conflict in the earth-life now overpast, even *the*
souls of the departed may be figuratively described as,
comparatively, in repose : but,

“ Absence of occupation is not Rest ! ”

Even of the mystical beings, who inhabit the Heaven of
Heavens, it is said, “ They *have no rest day and night*,
saying, Holy, Holy, Holy.” (Rev. iv. 8.) The parable
or history of Dives and Lazarus shews clearly enough
that there is no such thing as somnolence in the Beyond.
The souls of the Martyrs cannot be wrapped in age-long
lumber, if the agony of their expectation be pleading,
day and night, before GOD, “ How long, O LORD, holy
and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on
them that dwell on the earth ? ” (Rev. vi. 10.) A state,
in which GOD’S good work begun on earth in the souls
He has made is being “perfected,” cannot conceivably
be a lethargic condition of dreamy forgetfulness, of
mute stagnation. In this connection, it is of interest to

note that Article XL. of the Forty-two Articles of 1553 since, to the Church's loss, omitted, ran as follows :—

*"The soules of them that depart
this life, doe neither die with
the bodies, nor sleep idlie.
Thei whiche saie that the
soules of suche as depart
hens doe sleepe, being without
al sence, fealing,
or perceiuing vntil the day of
judgment, or affirme that the
soules die with the bodies, and
at the laste daie shall be raised
vp with the same, do vtterlie dis-
sent from the right beliefe de-
clared to vs in holie Scripture."*

No, these are something like the words which, the last long, lingering kiss imprinted upon those death-dampened rigid cheeks, the Christian would whisper in the ear of his beloved, now closing for evermore to the harsh discords of earth's many, many jarring voices :—

"Out of this vale of tears,
O Christian Soul, depart !
From wearing pains, and haunting fears,
And griefs that rend the heart !
Accept His sentence of release,
That speeds thee forth in solemn peace, . . .
To broadening light and deepening rest,
Till heaven shall make thee fully blest ! . . .

O crown of joys ! No more to stray,
No more to take thine own wild way,
No more the FRIEND of friends to leave,
No more His patient Spirit grieve ;
What promise sweet or boon secure
Can match these words, *I make thee pure ?*
So now—let HIM arise, and put thy foes to flight ;
For thee this day let Paradise fling wide her portals bright . . .
To GOD Who made thee, GOD Who bought,
And GOD, Whose grace thy cleansing wrought,
That hell no part in thee should claim,
Go !—in the all-victorious NAME !"¹

¹ Dr. Bright.

It would seem barely necessary to add that our difference with Rome does not relate merely to the imposition upon the Faithful of a belief in expiatory torments in a Purgatory of human invention. Purgatory carries with it *a whole system* of the earth, earthy, the traffic in Masses, the bribery of exclusive privileges for souls at their commercial value. “The doctrine of Purgatory is the mother of Indulgences.”¹ Involuntarily—Heaven pardon us, if, in so doing, we be guilty of an uncharity!—when speaking of this system, our thoughts recur to the Babylonish catalogue of marketable chattels, with its last startling item: “The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves—and *souls of men!*” (*Rev.* xviii. 12, 13.)

GOD forbid that we should even seem to speak of the Latin Church as almost beyond redemption, as fallen from her high estate as historically one of the most ancient and honourably distinguished of the apostolically founded Churches of Catholic Christendom. GOD forbid, again, that, because we believe indubitably that she “hath erred,” we should, therefore, envelop ourselves in, habituate ourselves to, an atmosphere of smug complacency and self-congratulation, as if we, and our Communion, were so immaculate, as to be incapable of further enlightenment and edification. To the mind of the present writer there is scarcely anything under

¹ Jeremy Taylor. *Dissuasive from Papery.* I. ch. i.

heaven so contemptible as a certain—dare I style it?—cocksure air of Pharisaism,—largely due, no doubt, to our insular position and to our imperial pre-eminence,—which is habitually assumed by your average Protestant Britisher. Owing to his adoption of this very superior attitude of *quasi*-infallibility, he condescends to patronize all continental piety, that does not happen to accord with his national temperament, as the outcome of a puerile, out-of-date superstition beneath his own serious consideration. With respect to the subject before us, in justice, it must be readily and thankfully acknowledged, that the Council of Trent¹ specifically vetoed the dispensation, for monetary considerations, of the superabundant merits of CHRIST and His Saints for the alleviation of Purgatorial pains, of which she claimed to possess a Treasury to draw upon. But, even so, it can hardly, I think, be contradicted that the Roman Church still, to this day, may be charged with being, what she is, I believe, nicknamed in France, "*La Religion d'argent*." Our forefathers, too, had a characteristic saying, "No penny, no *Paternoster*." This one consideration, of and by itself, is sufficient, to my mind, to damn what survives of the mediæval system, namely, private Masses at a price. "That our LORD'S ministry was eminently a ministry for *the poor*, is a commonplace, which need not be insisted upon. His relations were poor people, with the associations, the habits, the feelings of the poor. He spoke, it would appear, in a provincial north-country dialect, at least commonly. His language, His illustrations, His entire

¹ "*Pravos quaestus omnes pro his consequendis, unde plurima in Christiano populo abusuum causa fluxit, omnino abolendos esse.*" *Con. Trid. Sess. xxv.*

method of approaching the understandings and hearts of men, were suited to the apprehensions of the uneducated. When He spoke, the common people heard Him gladly. When He was asked by what signs He could prove His claims, He replied, amongst other things, ‘The poor have the Gospel preached to them.’ His first disciples were poor men; ‘not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called.’ As they looked back on it, the grace of His example was felt by His disciples to consist pre-eminently in this—‘that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich.’”¹ In the teeth of all this—except, rarely, as, for instance, on All Souls’ Day, the anniversaries or “month’s-minds” of Purgatorial Guilds, and a few other like occasions—Roman Masses for the dead are said, not for the Faithful departed generally, but for private individuals, who have paid for their Celebration according to a fixed tariff of charges. A system—or the relics of a system—which violates the essential character of Christianity as “The Gospel of the Poor,” to me stands, *ipso facto*, self-condemned.

This is not, of course, by any manner of means to question the rightfulness of the immemorial tradition of Christendom, which connects the Holy Eucharist with the remembrance therein of the departed. Here it is necessary to correct the false impression, prevalent in some quarters, that our Thirty-first Article of Religion condemns wholesale the practice of *Requiem* Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. No Church in the world could continue to style herself Catholic, after such a departure from the universal custom of Christendom in all ages.

¹ Liddon. University Sermons, *The Gospel of the Poor*.

Let us again note what the Article in question actually says :—

Unde missarum sacrificia, quibus vulgo dicebatur, sacerdotem offerre Christum in remissionem poenae aut culpae pro vivis et defunctis, blasphema figmata sunt, et perniciosae imposturae.

Wherefore *the sacrifices of Masses*, in which it was *commonly said* that the priests did offer CHRIST for the quick and dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.

Observe (1) that it is *not* "The Sacrifice of the Mass" that is here impugned, but "*the sacrifices of Masses*," both words being in the Plural number ; and (2) that it is a *current, popular* superstition, that is aimed at, "*quibus vulgo dicebatur.*" It was the whole system of *Private Masses, multiplied to extraordinary quantities*, with their concomitant evils, which was attacked. In particular, the monstrous "opinion" thus referred to in the Confession of Augsburg (Pt. ii. Art. 3) was before the minds of the framers of our Article. "There was added the opinion, which *augmented private Masses indefinitely*, viz., that CHRIST satisfied, by His Passion, for *original* sin, and instituted the Mass¹ as an oblation for *daily*

¹ I am, myself, completely satisfied with styling the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar either (1) The Holy Communion (1 Cor. x. 16), or (2) "The Liturgy" (Greek for "The Divine Service." See last Rubric at end of Office of Holy Communion), or (3) "The Holy Eucharist" (Greek for "Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." See Prayer of Oblation in Holy Communion Office), or (4) "The Holy Mysteries." (See Thanksgiving Prayer in the same Office.) But with regard to the term "Mass," it can hardly be understood as necessarily implying "Popery," for the First Reformed Prayer Book in English, of 1549, entitled the Office of Holy Communion "The Supper of the Lorde, and the Holy Communion, *commonly called the Masse.*" Yet the Litany, in this self-same Prayer Book, contained the following suffrage, since, in part, omitted, "From the tyrannye of the Byshop of Rome, and al hys detestable enormities, from al false doctryne and heresy. . . . Good Lord, deliver us." Thus the word "Mass" could not be included in Rome's "detestable

sins, mortal and venial.” “She (the Church of England) is not heretical. Her Thirty-first Article is only intended to guard jealously the unique completeness of the Sacrifice made by CHRIST upon the Cross—to guard it, moreover, not as against any formulated doctrine, such as that of Trent, but as against a current popular view; and who, that knows what has been ‘commonly said’ in mediæval and modern Roman theology, can doubt that it needs guarding? For the Eucharist is not even mystically a *renewal* of CHRIST’S Passion, but an act of co-operation with CHRIST’S heavenly intercession. CHRIST upon the Eucharistic altar is only ‘offered’ in the sense that His once-made Sacrifice is there perpetually presented and pleaded before the FATHER, as in heaven, so on earth. The altar is, so to speak, on a line not with Calvary, but with the heavenly Intercession.”¹ Whilst we are upon this subject, it is, perhaps, worth recalling the remarks *re* Article XXXI. of the Franciscan, Francis à Santa Clara, who endeavoured to demonstrate that there was nothing in our Thirty-nine Articles that conflicted with the special tenets of Latin Christianity. “In the latter part,” he says, “if it (Article XXXI.) be understood fitly, nothing is said against the Sacrifice of the Mass itself, but against the vulgar and commonly-received opinion about it, namely, that priests in this Sacrifice offer CHRIST for the living

enormities,” nor amongst the items of “al false doctryne.” For my own part, I repeat that I, for one, am not specially enamoured of the use of this term “Mass,” as if it were the only name for the Christian Passover consonant with Catholic belief and practice. In its justification, however, we have the testimony of the present Bishop of Bristol, when Bishop of Stepney, “The English Church has always been a self-going concern, and there has been no interference with her Mass—a good old English word, which there is no harm in using.”

¹ Gore. *Roman Catholic Claims*, pp. 176, 177.

and the dead, for remission of pain and guilt, so that, by virtue of this Sacrifice offered for them, independently of the sacrifice of the Cross, they gain remission for the people, &c. This is the popular opinion, which the Article here condemns. But it must be said, with the Holy Fathers, that in the Mass there is a true Sacrifice, though, if we speak of it in the same sense as the ancient sacrifices, it is not so properly a Sacrifice, for it is not immolated in bloody manner, as in the old ; for, as is said in the Nicene Canon, 'The Lamb, Which without immolation is immolated by the priests on the Holy Table, that is CHRIST Himself, is sacrificed, though it be not again slain.' We must say again (on account of this Article) that it is not primarily propitiatory, for this pertains to the Sacrifice on the Cross, though it may well be called so in itself, and as it were secondarily, because chiefly by the application of the bloody Sacrifice and by commemoration of it. . . . The unbloody death on the altar, then, derives its virtue from the bloody death upon the Cross ; for, as the Council of Trent says (Sess. xxii. cap. 2. *de Sacrific. Miss.*), 'The fruits of the bloody oblation are received most plentifully through this' [unbloody one]. And in this sense this Sacrifice is an image and setting forth of that Sacrifice upon the Cross, whence, as from a root, all salvation sprang. There will be no difficulty whatever on this point with the more learned Protestants, who allow the whole of this, as is to be seen in Dr. Andrewes against Perronius, and Dr. Montagu against Heigham, and in other writers commonly ; nor does this Article in any degree gainsay this opinion." ¹

¹ *Paraphrastica Expositio Articulorum Confessionis Anglicanæ*, by Franciscus à Sancta Clara (Dr. Christopher Davenport). Edited by Dr. Lee.

Celebrations, then, of the Holy Eucharist, not multiplied at a price, not the monopoly of the rich, not as suggesting a *repetition* or a *defect* of CHRIST'S “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world,” in connection with funerals, or upon the anniversaries of deaths, are part of the Catholic ‘deposit,’ and could not possibly be interdicted in our Church, so long as she continued to claim for herself the title “Catholic.” As such, therefore, the English Church has never forbidden them. This is clearly proved by the following considerations. (1) Though, to my mind, inadequately, the departed *are* commemorated specifically at *every* Anglican Eucharist at the conclusion of the prayer for “the Church militant here on earth.” “It has been urged in reply that the preceding rubric, ‘militant here on earth,’ was intended to fence and guard its petitions from any reference to the dead; but there was a Form in the Sarum Book of the Hours, published in 1531, entitled ‘A generall and devout prayer for the goode state of our Moder the Church mylitant here in erth.’ This prayer ends thus:—‘And grant to all the Faithful, whether living or departed, eternal life and rest in the land of the living, through CHRIST our LORD.’”¹ Secondly, there can hardly be a doubt that in the Prayer of Oblation the words, “We *and all Thy whole Church* may obtain remission of our sins, and *all other benefits* of His Passion,” include in their scope the departed as well as the living. “The latter phrase looks towards the ancient theory of the Church that the Blessed Sacrament was of use to the departed as well as to the living. It is a general term used by men, who were fearful of losing all such

¹ Luckock. *After Death*, pp. 241, 242.

commemoration, if inserted broadly and openly, and who yet feared lest no gate should be left open, by which the intention of such commemoration could enter."¹ That such a purpose *did* enter into the minds of the last revisers of the Prayer Book is demonstrated by the following comments upon the words in question by Cosin, Bishop of Durham, one of—in fact, the leader—of the company of Divines, who were concerned in that final reconstruction of the Anglican Liturgy. "Where," he says, "all the whole Church is to be understood, as well those that have been heretofore, and those that shall be hereafter, as those that are now the present members of it. . . . The virtue of this Sacrifice (which is here in this Prayer of Oblation commemorated and represented) doth not only extend itself to the living, and those that are present, but likewise to them that are absent, and them that be already departed, or shall in time to come live and die in the faith of CHRIST."²

(2) The last prayer in our Burial Office is still entitled '*The Collect.*' Why so? Because in the First English Prayer Book of 1549 this particular prayer was appointed for 'The Collect' at "The Celebration of the Holy Communion, when there is a burial of the dead." "While it may be matter of some regret that the Prayer Book provides no more than a special Collect for a *Requiem* Eucharist, it is interesting and some consolation to know, that in the early Church for several centuries no special form of Service for a Mass for the Dead seems to have been used, although such Masses were undoubtedly offered, the special intention being denoted by the introduction of the name of the departed person at some

¹ Blunt. *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, p. 394

² *Works*. V. 351, 517.

appropriate part of the Service, and, by the omission of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, *Alleluia*, and Kiss of Peace. . . . The earliest form of a special Service is in the Besançon Sacramentary of the 7th Century.”¹ (3) In 1560, under Queen Elizabeth, during the period of “*The Reformation Settlement*,” a Latin translation of the Prayer Book was issued by authority for use in colleges and schools. This translation contained, as an *addendum*, “*Celebratio Coenæ Domini in funeribus, si amici et vicini defuncti communicare velint.*” A Collect, Epistle, and two Gospels were provided in this Office.

Two quotations, as far apart in time as S. Augustine and Bishop Heber, will be sufficient to voice the universal sentiment of Christendom in favour of the consolatory practice of associating the Holy Eucharist with the departure of Christian souls to the Paradise of light and refreshment. Here is the first: “And, behold, the corpse (of his mother) was carried to the burial. We went and returned without tears. For not even in those prayers, which we poured forth unto Thee, *when the Sacrifice of our Redemption was offered on her behalf*, when now the corpse was by the grave’s side, as the custom there is, previous to its being laid therein, —not even in these prayers did I weep.”² Here is the other: “I have accordingly been myself *in the habit for some years* of recommending, on some occasions, *as after receiving the Sacrament*, etc., etc., my lost friends *by name* to GOD’S goodness and compassion through His SON, as what can do them no harm, and *may*, and I hope, *will*, be of service to them.”³

¹ From a tract, *Mass for the Dead*, published by G.A.S., p. 5.
Footnote.

² *Confessions*. Book IX. chap. xii.

³ *Diary of a Lady of quality*, p. 196.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REASONABLENESS OF PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD GENERALLY.

YOU would, then, advocate prayers for the dead? I reply unhesitatingly, Of course I do; how can I do otherwise? On *my* side I ask a question, I assume an aggressive, not merely a defensive position on this subject. I enquire, Why not? The burden of proof appears to me to lie not with me, but with the objector. When it was alleged, as a serious charge against him, that in his daily devotions John Wesley interceded with GOD for his dead, these were the authorities he cited in justification of his practice: "The earliest antiquity and the Church of England."¹ A custom, which, if *any* custom can, satisfies the canon of Catholicity, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*;" a custom admittedly not disallowed by our own branch of the Church Catholic, and habitually resorted to by a very apostolical succession of some of the holiest and most learned sons and daughters of Anglican Christendom ever since the Reformation, as before it, must require to have its heterodoxy proved to demonstration, up to the hilt, before it can be brushed lightly aside in the interests of blind prejudice. By way of introduction to the whole subject, let me set down side by side the opinions of the present and the late Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject of prayers for the departed.

¹ *Answer to Lavington.* Works ix. 55.

Here are men, surely, who admittedly have some claim to speak the mind of the English Church.

EDWARD WHITE BENSON,
Late Archbishop of Canterbury.

¹ Yea, LORD, and give rest to my Martin (his eldest son who died at Winchester in 1877) in a place of light, where he may behold the light of Thy countenance, where sorrow and sighing is fled away.³

Almighty Everlasting God, Who art LORD both of the living and of the dead, and pitiest all those, whom Thou dost foreknow to be Thine by faith and works: we humbly beseech Thee that those, for whom we have determined to offer our prayers, both those whom this world yet holdeth in the flesh, and those already unclothed of the body, whom the world to come hath received, may by Thy goodness and mercy be counted worthy to attain pardon of all their sins, and eternal joys through our LORD.⁴

FREDERICK TEMPLE,
Present Archbishop of Canterbury.

² There is of course, a very great difference between praying to the departed and praying for them. They are in God's hands; but it is possible that He may allow our prayers to help them, and we cannot point out any evil that is likely to come from such prayers, provided only that we do not allow ourselves to be led into adopting dreams and fictions concerning their condition.

To pray for the dead is not forbidden by the New Testament, and it is not forbidden by the Church of England, and our Ecclesiastical Courts accordingly have so decided it.

Now, then, for the question I have myself asked. *Why not pray for the dead?* To revert for a moment to a part of our subject which has been discussed in an earlier section of this treatise, What is death? Upon

¹ The selections are from his *Prayers Public and Private*, edited by Rev. H. Benson.

² From Charge delivered at his First Visitation by Frederick, Archbishop of Canterbury. ³ *Post Officium Wellingtonense*.

⁴ "Daily to be recited by me as Prebendary of Heydour-cum-Walton in the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lincoln for the health and rest of our Benefactors."

the occurrence of death, do souls sink into a condition of insensate slumber, death *per se* having effected a consummation so complete, as to leave no possible room for further effort on their behalf? If so, then possibly there is no occasion for prayers for the dead. But where and when do the New Testament and the Church speak of mere death as the source and vehicle of that holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD? No, for a Paul, though he had finished his course, kept the faith, fought the good fight, was "*laid up the crown of righteousness,*" which his LORD would bestow upon him "*at that day*"; but not only upon him, but also upon all "*that have loved His appearing.*" "Beloved," witnesses likewise S. John, "*now are we children of GOD, and it is not yet manifest what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*" The purification here spoken of is a *gradual* process, begun indeed on earth, but, unless after death the soul forfeits "*this hope,*" the purification, that is the effect of its enjoyment, must surely continue to operate. At any rate, S. John does not so much as hint at death as an interruption of the work of sanctification. I imagine he would have been amazed if anybody had suggested the idea to him. His only *terminus ad quem* is "*When He shall appear.*"

"She is not dead—the child of our affection—
But gone into that school,
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And CHRIST Himself doth rule.
In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By Guardian Angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives! whom we call dead!"

And wherever life is, according to the law of GOD's universe, that life must be an advancing life; there must be progress. Else decay and death must ensue.

Why not pray for our dead? "It is useless," reply the unthinking, if not the scornful. "They are in GOD's keeping. Let well be." But are not also our living friends—in point of fact, perhaps, less living than those we style dead—are not *they also* in GOD's keeping? Yet we pray *for them*. Now, let us think, what are the uses of any prayer? Its purpose, you perhaps reply, is the obtaining of our petitions. "Ask, and it shall be given you." (*S. Matt.* vii. 7.) Yes, but the same Divine lips have reminded us of what is but matter of every day observation, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (*S. Matt.* v. 45.) Moreover, the ancient Covenant between GOD and man remains in force to this day: "Seed-time and harvest, summer and winter shall never cease, while the earth remaineth"—as we know for a fact, both for those who pray and those who never utter a syllable of prayer. Shall I, then, cease to offer up to GOD the suffrage of "our solemn Litany," "That it may please Thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them; we beseech Thee to hear us, good LORD?" Shall I cease thus to plead with my Maker, because I have His own word, plighted in the time of the world's infancy, that so it shall be, or ever my baby lips knew how to breathe the cry of the suppliant? "Give us this day our daily bread." The Truth Himself has taught me to proffer daily this request. Yet, each morning, as I utter it by my bedside, I know for certain that my breakfast already awaits me. Is such prayer, then, the

Prayer of the LORD, useless? Has, in fact, a bargain been struck between me and high heaven—so many prayers, so many benefits; no prayers, no benefits? Must I esteem prayer a duty or no duty conditionally upon my obtaining or not obtaining *a visible quid pro quo*? Surely, surely prayer is something less of the earth, earthy, something nobler than that; the homage, namely, the inevitable homage, of impotence upon its knees at the footstool of Omnipotence, the obeisance of a spirit “in subjection to the FATHER of spirits.” The attitude of prayer is the necessary attitude of a creature. Prayer is, after all, but praise in a minor key. Prayer is the acknowledgment by a world of finite beings that whatever they possess, for themselves and others, yes, and shall possess, is a gift of the One Infinite Being. It is a recognition as much of what has been received as of what shall be received. It is Faith uttering itself. It is the expression of man’s Godward instinct.

“ Is it not in my nature to adore ?
And e’en for all my Reason do I not
Feel HIM and thank HIM and pray to HIM—now ?
Can I forego the trust that HE loves me ? ”

Prayer is not necessarily confined to speech; there are times when the heart is too full to describe its emotions in human language. Prayer may be but an upward impulse, an unspoken aspiration. Certainly prayer cannot presume to impart *information* to Omniscience. This, then, would be something like the vein of my supplication on behalf of my dear dead: “Almighty, all souls are Thine—all. And Thou art not a GOD of the dead, but of the living, for all are alive in Thy sight. The soul of my beloved, it was Thine to give, Thine to summon hence. I know it is safe in Thy most holy

keeping. Thou wilt supply its every need ; purify it from its last and faintest stain of sin ; fit it for the inheritance of the Saints in light, though all unworthy. Almighty, I leave it to Thee. This my prayer is but the inevitable utterance of faith's surrender, to which my littleness, Thy greatness, impels me. Almighty, fulfil all that is in my heart—nay, infinitely more, all that is in *Thine* heart—for my beloved in Thy Paradise. For the precious sake of Thy CHRIST. Amen."

For consider whither this objection of the "uselessness" of prayer for the dead must conduct us. "To forbid prayer for the dead," the late Mr. Gladstone says somewhere, "is to undermine the doctrine of prayers for the living." It is true, of course, that the departed do not require precisely *the same blessings* which the living on earth require. They do not need, for instance, deliverance in the hour of temptation. But because they do not want the identical benefits that we want, who survive them, are we, therefore, to assume that they want *no benefits at all*? Even with respect to the living, we adapt the language of our petitions on their behalf according to the various exigencies of various persons in various conditions. For example, in a familiar Collect, we plead, "Strengthen and confirm the Faithful ; turn and soften the wicked ; rouse the careless ; recover the fallen ; restore the penitent,"—though, of course, we know quite well, before we open our lips to utter these several requests, that GOD is already granting strength to the Faithful, restoration to the penitent, recovery to the lapsed. Here you have different necessities attaching to different grades of souls. So too, in the cases of spirits, after all, but passed into a higher sphere of existence, as yet unfamiliar to us, we adjust the terms

of our suffrages to meet the requirements of their new environment. Unless, I repeat, it be assumed that death completes the salvation of imperfect souls, then there must be in the Church Expectant those needs to be supplied, which are incidental to a state of expectation, just as in the Church Militant there are other needs to be supplied, incidental to a condition of warfare. In a state of perpetual conflict, like the earth-life, it would seem impossible for the soul to breathe—save at rare and brief intervals—that atmosphere of restfulness and recollectedness, which, as much as conflict, is essential to the attainment of the holiness which qualifies for the Beatific Vision. Therefore the entrance of any soul upon such a tranquil condition of contemplation and self-introspection in the clear light of the Ante-chamber of the King's Palace will surely suggest suffrages in plenty for the litanies of the prayerful on its behalf. Whilst I pen these lines, the heart of England is going out in prayer for those who are fighting so gallantly their country's battles in South Africa. But our prayers do not cease to be offered for the supply of their needs the moment we hear the glad tidings that the impending battle has been fought and won, and that now our loved ones are in comparative safety.

After all, when one hears folk talking so glibly as some do, about prayers for the departed being "useless," one is inclined to ask them the blunt question, "How know you or I what *is* useless, in dealing with a purely spiritual effort like prayer?" If I invest a sum of money, that money of mine being a material thing, I may draw up a balance-sheet, and reckon up to the last farthing what I have gained or lost by the transaction. But the results of an immaterial force like the force of

prayer cannot be thus scheduled in opposite columns. To quote once more the almost hackneyed words of the late Lord Tennyson :—

“ If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me, day and night.”

No, there is no duty—much less a religious duty—the exact amount of the profit of which can be computed in the coinage of Time. Surely, this is the mainspring of the machinery, that sets to work the energies of every worker in the workshop, whose foreman is the Carpenter of Nazareth.

“ Go with the spiritual life, the higher volition and action,
With the great girdle of GOD, go and encompass the earth !—
Not for the gain of the gold, for the getting, the hoarding, the
having,
But for the joy of the deed ; but for the Duty to do ! ”¹

For suppose, for the moment, that my prayer for my dead *were* “ useless ” in the ordinary, earthy, utilitarian sense of the word. What then ? It is an act of mercy this to pray for others. When I can do nought else for that dear being, whose white, cold form lies yonder before my tear-misted eyes insensate and deaf ; when no words of mine, even the most impassioned out of a wrung heart’s depths, can pierce his sealed ears ; when no hot kiss of mine can warm his bloodless lips ; what if I kneel me down by his side, and pour out my whole soul in an agony of prayer for his soul’s repose ? Useless—useless—useless, you say. Peace, blasphemer, for in *that* presence to talk of uselessness sounds like a very profanity. Useless—for *him* ? How know *you* ? Can *your* ken more than mine pursue the spirit’s unknown

¹ A. H. Clough.

career? Useless—for *him*—my prayer? Granted, if you *will* have it so. But *I—I*, who have prayed my prayer, rise from my knees a better man, for having out of my heart's heart poured forth my *De Profundis*, "Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O LORD : LORD, hear my voice. If Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O LORD, who may abide it? There is mercy, mercy with Thee ; *therefore* shalt Thou be feared." A deed of mercy done for even one beyond the reach of mercy—if there be such an one—will at least return in blessings upon *my* head, the head of its doer.

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed ;
It blesseth *him that gives* and him that takes."

Was ever man or woman none the better for having done a deed of mercy? God forbid!

But, perhaps you will be asking, what does the Bible say about prayers for the dead? I reply, possibly not much *directly*, but *indirectly* sufficient to make me, for one, believe that *not* to pray for my dead would necessitate for me the discovery of some altogether new Bible, instead of the old, old Book. For I find in the real Bible—at any rate in the New Testament—no trace whatever of that imaginary line commonly drawn between the Church "Militant here in earth" and the Church Expectant or Triumphant. I find, on the contrary, that our LORD Himself declares GOD to be, "Not the GOD of the dead, but of the living : for *all* live unto Him." (*S. Luke* xx. 38.) I find S. Paul reiterating almost word for word that pronouncement of his Master : "Whether we live, we live unto the LORD : or whether we die, we die unto the LORD :

whether we live therefore or die, we are the LORD'S. For to this end CHRIST died and lived again, that He might be the LORD of both the dead and the living." (*Rom.* xiv. 8, 9.) I read, "That in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things *under the earth*." (*Phil.* ii. 10.) This selfsame Name of JESUS, I learn, is the Name, "of whom *the whole family* (Perhaps, "*every fatherhood*"), *in heaven and on earth* is named." (*Eph.* iii. 15.) I am informed that we, Christians, "*are*"—not *shall*—"come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to GOD the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." (*Heb.* xii. 22, 23.) In all this I discover nothing whatever which should make me dream of ceasing to intercede with my GOD for those I love, simply because they have now passed into a new chamber of the one home of the All-Father. Possibly, however, you persist, that I know what the living need, what I should pray on their behalf. But *do* I always know what even the living really want, their deepest needs? Surely, times without number, I ignorantly pray for myself, for others, prayers, which GOD can never fulfil, since their fulfilment would not be for my own, for their lasting good—

" Prayers, which God *in pity*
Refused to grant or hear ! "

Surely, times without number, with John Keble, all of us must perforce protest :—

" Far better we should cross His lightning's path,
Than be according to our idols heard,
And God should take us at our own vain word ! "

No, it is a purely artificial boundary, this that we are accustomed to regard as bisecting the human family into a visible minority and an invisible majority. The only prayers that in the nature of things must cease at death are prayers that deal with the needs of a soul undergoing its probation, in a condition of warfare. For we have already tried to see that what death terminates is not spiritual progress in general, but only such spiritual progress as is bound up with the actual conflict of the Will in face of temptation. Once let a man rid himself of that very hallucination of the brain to the effect that death is an end, instead a mere change, of existence, and prayer for the so-called "dead" will seem as natural to him as prayer for the so-called "living"—if this fettered, dying life of ours on earth can be called life at all, as compared with the full, liberated life of the spirit-world with its infinite possibilities. Look at the matter, as it really stands, straight in the face. Here is a person I have prayed for incessantly until his very last gasp. A second after that last gasp of his, I am, as automatically as a machine, to cease praying for him altogether! But why—why? He is what he was a moment or two ago, my brother, my beloved. In reality—and, therefore, to GOD—he is still alive, more alive than I am. There is no break in his existence—the immortal cannot suspend for an instant their being—why, then, should there be any break in my intercession on his behalf? To me there seems no more reason to cease at his death to commend him to GOD'S keeping than there would be to cease to commend to the same all-holy keeping a friend, who in the past had been my daily, hourly companion, but who is now leaving my side to cross the high seas *en route* for another continent

with a new climate, altogether new conditions of existence, a strange language, as yet unheard of dangers all its own, experiences utterly unfamiliar either to him or myself. Naturally there will be *fresh suffrages* in my litany of intercession for him, corresponding, so far as I know, to his fresh surroundings, and fresh requirements, but surely no cessation altogether of my supplications on his behalf on the paltry plea that I do not know precisely *all his present necessities*.

Of course, however, I *do* know, without enquiry, *some* petitions that must apply to his case under his present, or, in fact, any other conceivable circumstances, in which he may be placed in the future. There are universal needs of all humanity everywhere. Take an instance of *one* such petition *invariably* applicable to the cases of "all sorts and conditions of men." I find in the New Testament the following warning from the mouth of the LORD: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. . . . Whosoever shall speak against the HOLY SPIRIT, it shall not be forgiven him, *neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.*" (S. Matt. xii. 31, 32.) From this passage I naturally enough infer, that *some* sins, short of one unpardonable sin, may find forgiveness in the world or age to come. S. Augustine adopts without hesitation this *primâ facie* interpretation of CHRIST'S words. "For," he says, "the prayer either of the Church or of some godly persons is heard for some departed this life: but for them, which, being regenerated in CHRIST, have not spent their life so wickedly, that they may be judged unworthy of such mercy: or else so devoutly, that they may be found to have no need of such mercy. Even as also after the

resurrection there shall be some of the dead, which shall obtain mercy after the punishments, which the spirits of the dead do suffer, that they may not be cast into everlasting fire. For *otherwise that should not be truly spoken* concerning some, that 'they shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come,' *unless* there were some, *who although they had no remission in this, yet might have it in the world to come.*"¹ Now the pardon of sins is just one of those subjects for prayer obligatory upon Christians, both on their own and others' behalf, under *all* circumstances. Wherever, then, and whenever sins remain to find pardon—sins of living or sins of dead—as a Christian man, I am bound to kneel me down, and plead for the souls, who stand in need of such absolution.

Here, I suppose, I must perforce so far digress from my immediate line of argument, as to say a word or two by way of reply to the objection, that the expression, "*Neither in this world, nor in that which is to come,*" is simply a periphrasis for "*never:*" and that so no suggestion is here made by our LORD as to any remission of sins after death. Well, for my own part, I am bound at once to ask this question: If so, why—we ask the question in all reverence—did not CHRIST, in pity for souls in obvious danger of misunderstanding Him, say, "*never,*" and simply "*never*"? If it be a truism generally that "*language was intended to conceal a man's meaning,*" not to reveal it, then, in particular—to listen to the *ex parte* interpretations of various passages of Holy Writ by ecclesiastical controversialists—one must surely conclude, that our LORD and His Apostles were the very worst sinners

¹ *De Civitat. Dei*, Bk. xxi., ch. 24.

of all men, as regards mystifying their hearers and readers, by the adoption of enigmatical phraseology, the signification of which is always *anything but* the *primâ facie* signification. The demands made upon one's powers of imagination by partizan exegesis, and by the subtleties of Criticism, have certainly by this time accustomed us to approaching many texts of the Bible by very circuitous paths in preference to the direct route. But just think of the seriousness in this instance of attempting to shirk the plain deduction, which lies on the very surface of this emphatic utterance of the SAVIOUR of a whole world. Does not the charity, which "hopeth all things," rather incline us—apart from the prejudices of inveterate bias—to make the most of, instead of explaining away, words, which cast a ray of light upon what, without them, would spell despair to millions of the souls of our brethren departed? I, for one, could not for an instant conceive of the CHRIST, of all persons, employing language, concerning so tremendous a subject, which, on the very face of it, would *even seem* to hold out *false* hopes of pardon in the Hereafter to multitudes of souls imperilled by a natural, fairly inevitable misconception of His very own words on that all-important subject. If any doubt, however, still linger in any man's mind as to the interpretation of this same expression in S. Matthew's narrative, "*Neither in this world, nor in that which is to come,*" let him compare with it S. Mark's version of the identical utterance: "He that shall blaspheme against the HOLY GHOST, hath *never* forgiveness, but is guilty of *an eternal sin.*" "If forgiveness were limited entirely to the present life, a period of threescore years and ten, would there not be something unnecessarily strong in

such a deep-reaching expression as this, something almost unnatural in the accumulation of the '*never*' and the '*eternal?*' It would surely have sufficed to have pronounced the sin to be simply unpardonable."¹ Such an extraordinarily emphatic mode of declaring this one sin for evermore irremissible, would obviously seem to imply—especially when placed side by side with S. Matthew's report of the LORD'S dictum—that other and lesser sins *were* pardonable at some period or other short of Eternity. If not, then—but silence is best.

My answer, then, to the demand for Scriptural proof—if by that you mean the production of so many specific texts, which legalize the doctrine after the manner of an Act of Uniformity—of the rightfulness of prayers for the dead is the emphatic and reiterated assertion, that *the whole tenour* of the New Testament revelation, as to what death is and is not, as to what may be expected after death, renders it absolutely impossible for me to do otherwise than intercede with GOD for the departed. "Why"—the innocency and trust of childhood once asked, when reprimanded for continuing to pray for her little dead brother asleep in his flower-garlanded coffin—"why mayn't I pray for Freddie, *now he's asleep in his new cradle?*" "There is no reason whatever why," I reply, for one, with the *whole* New Testament in my hands. Of course, *if* death really be the termination or the suspension of the soul's career, then no doubt the *Amen* to the Commendatory Prayer to be said by the priest "for a sick person at the point of departure" must indeed be the grand *Amen* to the final suffrage of the litany of my heart's heart on behalf of my beloved. But then, if this be so in *his* case, what is the logical

¹ Luckock. *After Death*, p. 71.

consequence? "Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD." Millions—millions—millions dying without this "holiness," are passing every day that dawns beyond the reach of even the prayers of the charitable! But it is not so. The New Testament, *as a whole*, does *not* represent death as a gate over the lintel of which is written in ink of blood and tears, "All hope abandon ye who enter here!" There is, moreover, one passage in particular—and, to my mind, one is sufficient—which *does* convey a positive authority for the offering up to GOD of prayers for the departed. Here it is:—

"The LORD grant mercy unto *the house of Onesiphorus*; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me (*the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day*); and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well." (2 S. Tim. i. 16-18.)

"Salute Prisca and Aquila, and *the household of Onesiphorus*." (2 S. Tim. iv. 19.)

"The LORD grant unto him (Onesiphorus) to find mercy of the LORD in that day." Surely here is an apostolic prayer for the dead. But here again, as in so many other instances, your partisan will jump up in hot haste, and bid us reject the plain, *primâ facie* understanding of the words before us, such plain, *primâ facie* understandings in the case of the Bible being, according to him, always inadmissible. Onesiphorus, he will assure us, was not dead at all. But just look at the facts as they stand. Surely, on the face of it, to judge from the fact (1) that the deeds of kindness rendered to S. Paul are uniformly spoken of as *in the past*, and (2) that "the household

of Onesiphorus," not Onesiphorus himself, is saluted—and that in a context full of the personal names of individuals—the natural inference is that Onesiphorus was dead. The Apostle's prayers for "the household of Onesiphorus," and Onesiphorus himself, correspond with their respective situations. For "the household" it is pleaded that GOD will "grant mercy," but no date is mentioned in their cases; whereas, in the case of the head of the household it is pleaded that he may "find mercy of the LORD" upon a definite occasion, that occasion, for which the departed are specially waiting in hope, namely, "*at that day*." It is worth noting that this identical expression "at that day" occurs again in this short Epistle in connection with the "crown of righteousness" which the LORD will confer upon the writer himself "at that day." Even Bishop Ellicott makes the following admission: "While then, for example, we justly protest against the use of 1 Cor. iii. 13 to establish Purgatory. . . . so, in the case of 2 S. Tim. i. 16 (comp. ch. iv. 19) we do not shrink from giving the opinion that the terms of the verse seem to imply, that Onesiphorus was dead at the time that the Epistle was written, though we know the use that will be made of the statement."¹

But we are not yet out of the wood. The self-same objector will airily tell us, that here is no prayer at all, but a mere "pious aspiration." This is our answer, in the words of Dean Luckock²: "The slightest acquaintance with the forms of prayer for the dead in the

¹ From Essay by Bishop Ellicott, "Scripture and its Interpretation," in *Aids to Faith*, edited by Archbishop Thomson, p. 424.

² See *After Death*, pp. 79, 80.

Primitive Liturgies will be enough to identify it with the expressions in common use ; this petition for mercy, and rest through mercy, being one of most frequent occurrence." The writer proceeds to quote a long extract from the works of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, who unhesitatingly appeals to, and cites S. Paul's words to Timothy as an authority for prayers for the dead. But, after all, one must feel that it is idle to waste one's time in mere hairsplitting about the difference between prayers and "pious aspirations." Surely prayer is not tied down to the employment of one stereotyped form of speech ! Surely prayer is something a trifle above a mere question of syntax. That homely "Grace before meat," which one learnt upon one's mother's knees, "For what we are about to receive, the LORD make us truly thankful," is surely no mere "pious aspiration," because it is not phrased slightly differently, and does not read, "For what we are about to receive, O LORD, make us truly thankful." Take the most familiar formulary of intercession for the departed, "May the souls of the Faithful departed, through the mercy of GOD, rest in peace, and let light perpetual shine upon them." This formulary corresponds pretty much with the shape of S. Paul's formulary on behalf of Onesiphorus, *but with this important difference*. The Apostle asks for Onesiphorus *more* than light and refreshment in the Intermediate State ; he asks, in fact, *the very most that could be asked for any soul*, namely, "that he may find mercy at that day."

"Mercy, good LORD, Mercy we ask ;
This is our only prayer ;
For Mercy, LORD, is all our suit ;
Oh, in Thy Mercy, spare !"

Were we permitted by our Church, at the burial of the dead, but to breathe across the open grave of *our* beloved this all-embracing supplication of S. Paul for *his* beloved, I fancy we should not be disposed to quarrel about whether such supplication were a technical "prayer" or a mere "pious aspiration"! And, we venture to add, had generation after generation of Englishmen been accustomed, at funerals, to think of "Mercy at that day" for the departed soul, as *the* one subject of the mourner's litany on its behalf, we clergy should not to-day have our whole sense of "reverence and godly fear" outraged, at nine out of every ten funerals at which we officiate, by the expression thereof of what sounds in our ears like sheer blasphemy, the expression of absolute assurance, that the deceased has been excused the Judgment to come, and is passed at once, however imperfect his spiritual condition may have been, into the very Heaven of Heavens. For ourselves, we cannot imagine a more "dangerous deceit" than the common Protestant fiction, to the practical effect, that men may live as they like to live, and, at the end of a careless, if not misspent, life, by virtue of the mere fact of dying, expect to be immediately translated, without a solitary cry for mercy upon their own lips, or upon *our* lips on their behalf :

" To join in all the praises the redeemed ones do sing,
Within those heavenly places,
Where the angels veil their faces,
In awe and adoration, in the Presence of the King."

One such prayer from the pages of the New Testament, the object of which is the obtaining of the uttermost that can be postulated for any soul, is authority enough for all like prayers for all the departed, not finally impenitent, not beyond the reach of mercy. It would

seem barely credible, surely, that the Primitive Church, even the Infant Church in the age of the Catacombs, when the Faith was at its purest before love had had time to grow cold, could have accepted, without questioning, the custom of prayers for the dead, and incorporated it into the Primitive Liturgies, unless it had been absolutely convinced that there was amply adequate Christian sanction for their use. At all events, our LORD Himself breathed not a syllable condemnatory of the practice of interceding for the departed, and, assuredly, we are "bound to consider the silences of Scripture no less than its utterances."

If any question be raised as to the teaching of the English Church upon the subject, it will suffice to recall the judgment given in 1838 in the case of *Breeks v. Woolfrey* before the Arches Court. The decision, in this test case, of Sir Herbert Jenner Fust was "that no authority or canon has been pointed out, by which the practice of praying for the dead has been expressly prohibited." But this evidence, you object possibly, is only of a negative character. Well, here is a historical fact, from which something like a positive argument in favour of prayers for the dead may be reasonably adduced. The English Church, on one occasion since the Reformation, having the issue clearly before her, definitely declined to condemn them. The Twenty-second Article of Religion, "Of Purgatory," as originally drafted, included the words, "*De precatone pro defunctis*," "concerning prayers for the dead." These additional words are actually to be found in the original MSS., signed by the six Royal chaplains, to whom Cranmer submitted them "to make report of their opinions touching the same." *But they disappeared al-*

together before the publication of the Article in question. This is surely a significant enough fact. Here is manifestly an intentional refusal, on the part of our Church, to censure, and veto the custom of interceding for the departed along with "the *Romish* doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, etc.," actually censured and vetoed by her.

In conclusion, it would seem superfluous to cite extensively the well-known opinions of the goodly company of Anglican Saints and Theologians, who, since the Reformation, have written or spoken in favour of, and themselves restored to, this Catholic observance. I, therefore, merely recall to mind some half a dozen remarkable instances out of a very apostolical succession of such witnesses. Thus Bishop Andrewes—a saint if ever the English Church produced a saint—who flourished 1605–1626, in his *Private Devotions*, prays,

"O Thou, Who didst die and rise again,
To be LORD both of the dead and living,
Live we or die we,
Thou art our LORD;
LORD, have pity on living and dead."

Isaac Barrow (1630–1677), is stated by his biographer to have been "mighty for it." In the Cathedral of S. Asaph may be seen the following inscription upon the tomb of his uncle, Bishop Barrow: "*O vos transeuntes in domum Domini, in domum orationis, orate pro con-servo vestro, ut inveniatur misericordiam in die Domini!*" "O ye who pass into the house of the LORD, into the house of prayer, pray for your fellow-servant, that he may find mercy in the day of the LORD."

From "a paper of the Duchess of York, circa 1673," I extract the following words: "I spoke severally to

two of the best Bishops we have in England (Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Walter Blandford, Bishop of Worcester), who both told me . . . that praying for the dead was one of the ancient things in Christianity, that for their parts they did it daily."

In the collection of prayers, published at the end of the works of Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), I read the following: "I commend, O LORD, so far as it may be lawful, into Thy hands the soul of my departed mother, beseeching Thee to grant her whatsoever is most beneficial to her in her present state." January 23rd, 1759.

In 1733, John Wesley had printed a series of forms of prayer for use every day in the week. These he republished in a carefully revised Edition of his Works, issued in Bristol 1771-1773, from the Preface to which I extract the following words: "So that in this Edition I present to serious and candid men my last and maturest thoughts, agreeable, I hope, to Scripture, Reason, and Christian Antiquity." Since *daily* in this Manual of Prayers, at the age of 68 years, he included Prayers for the Dead, there can be no question as to John Wesley's opinion on this subject. These Intercessions are retained after his death in the Editions of Wesley's Works of 1809 and 1818. Here, for instance, is a specimen, that for Saturday night: "O LORD, Thou GOD of Spirits and of all flesh, be mindful of Thy faithful from Abel the just even unto this day; and for Thy SON'S sake give to them and to us in Thy due time a happy resurrection and a glorious rest at Thy right hand for evermore."

Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester (1845-1873), on one occasion thus stated his opinion:

"Nothing which you have urged affects my judgment, that the Church of England has nowhere disallowed the words I have permitted to be employed ('Eternal rest give unto him, O LORD, and let light perpetual shine upon him'), and that their disallowance would, therefore, have been a breach of charity."

Finally, the late Archbishop Benson, of blessed memory, from whose recently published *Prayers Public and Private* we have already selected two specimens—and many more such might be cited *passim* throughout the volume—was in the habit, it appears, "*Post officium Divinum*,¹ of secretly offering up to GOD the petition of the ancient and familiar formulary, "May the souls of the Faithful, through the mercy of GOD, rest in peace. Amen." The above quotations, of course, are not exhaustive: they are, in fact, but types of a whole catena of like expressions of opinion available, if space permitted, to demonstrate that, ever since the Reformation, as before it, the most loyal of Anglicans have made no secret about their belief in the rightfulness of prayers for the dead.

Nor, of course, is the belief in the reasonableness of prayers for the dead confined to Catholicism—Eastern or Western. In our own country it is certainly not the monopoly of Anglicanism—much less of "High" Anglicanism. For instance, only the other day, in the columns of *The Christian World*—perhaps the most extreme organ of Protestant Nonconformity—a series of questions like the following, "May we pray for them (the dead)?"² were discussed in an Article headed "The Communion of

¹ *Prayers Public and Private of Archbishop Benson*, p. 168.

² *The Christian World*, April 5th, 1900, quoted in Correspondence Columns of *The Guardian*, April 11th, 1900.

the Dead." In the course of the discussion, the following words were actually used :—"There is running through the literature of the early Church a sense of fellowship with the departed, and a whole attitude and culture of the soul connected with it, that our later time has somewhat lost. It is in the Greek Fathers as well as in the Latin. There are gulfs of difference in their general view of the gospel between a Clement of Alexandria and an Origen on the one hand, and a Tertullian and an Augustine on the other ; but they are one in the sense of this intimate link between themselves and those within the veil. They pursued them with constant thought and aspiration, and believed they were helped by their prayers. And, nearer home, it is worth remembering that such English divines as Jeremy Taylor, Andrewes, Cosin, Ken, Heber, to whom we may add Dr. Johnson, and, if we mistake not, John Wesley, prayed for the dead, and that while the Puritans generally disallowed the practice, so strong a Reformer as Zwingli admitted it. And why should we not pray for the dead ? What is prayer, in the best conception of it, but the following of those we love with aspiration and affection, with desire for their highest good, with the whole best emotion of our soul ? What barbarous infidelity has taught us that death interposes a limit to this outgoing ? The notion that those who now rest in GOD, are, because of that, beyond the reach or need of prayer is heathen and not Christian. It is disloyal at once to GOD, to the departed themselves, and to our own best instincts." One could hardly quote stronger language than the above in support of the Catholic custom of intercession with GOD for the departed.

It will be sufficient for my present purpose to add to

the sentiments of advanced Nonconformity just quoted the following, to my mind, exquisitely beautiful lines,¹ written by a Presbyterian minister, whose name I have but recently been enabled to discover. For myself—and I imagine for thousands upon thousands—these thoughtful verses express all the yearnings of our heart's heart on behalf of those who have passed beyond the veil of sight and sense, to swell the ranks of the unnumbered hosts of the Church Expectant.

“O'er land and sea, love follows with fond prayers
Its dear ones in their troubles, griefs, and cares ;
 There is no spot,
On which it does not drop this tender dew,
Except the grave, and there it bids adieu
 And prayeth not.

“Why should *that* be the only place uncheered
By prayer, which to our hearts is most endeared,
 And silent grown ?
Living, we sought for blessings on their head ;
Why should our lips be sealed when they are dead,
 And we alone ?

“Idle ? their doom is fixed ? Ah ! who can tell ?
Yet, were it so, I think no harm could well
 Come of my prayer.
And oh ! the heart o'erburdened with its grief
This comfort needs, and finds therein relief
 From its despair.

“Shall God be wroth because we love them still,
And call upon His love to shield from ill
 Our dearest best ?
And bring them home, and recompense their pain,
And cleanse their sin, if any sin remain,
 And give them rest ?

¹ By Walter C. Smith, D.D., LL.D. *Edinburgh, circa 1885.*
Published in *The Church Electric*, U.S.A.

" Nay, I will not believe it. I will pray
As for the living, for the dead each day.
They will not grow
Less meet for Heaven, when followed by a prayer,
To speed them home, like summer-scented air
From long ago.

" Who shall forbid the heart's desires to flow
Beyond the limits of the things we know
In Heaven above ?
The incense, that the golden censers bear,
Is the sweet perfume from the saintly prayer
Of trust and love."

CHAPTER IX.

PRAYER FOR OTHERS THAN "THE FAITHFUL" DEPARTED.

BUT, you may ask, for how many or how few of the departed would you pray? For myself, I reply that, since to GOD *all* are alive, and it is to GOD that I pray, with regard to the scope of intercession, I am unable to draw distinctions, either in the case of dead or living, other than the distinction drawn by the beloved disciple himself. "This," S. John witnesses, "is the boldness which we have toward Him; that, if we ask *anything according to His will*, He heareth us. . . . If any man see his brother sinning a sin *not unto death*, he shall ask, and GOD will give him life for them that sin *not unto death*. There *is* a sin unto death; not concerning *this* do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is *a sin not unto death*." (1 S. John v. 14, 16, 17.) Without daring, upon the strength of this passage, to catalogue sins as either sins venial or sins mortal, but placing side by side with this utterance the fact that there is but *one* sin that can be forgiven "neither in this world nor in that which is to come," for myself, I am bound to conclude, that, since apparently only the wilful reprobate and conscious apostate would seem beyond all redemption, I may pray for *all* souls, not guilty of the single unpardonable sin, *all* souls still ultimately saveable. Prayer for the finally impenitent could not be prayer "according to His (GOD'S) Will," for to ask GOD to alter the eternal

laws of His universe, in favour of a hardened rebel against their indisputable sovereignty over him and all else, would be to challenge GOD'S character. With Milton, we must perforce confess :—

" Prayer against His absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth :
Therefore to His great bidding I submit."

For the several laws of GOD are not so many arbitrary enactments of omnipotent caprice upon the throne of all the worlds, but they are GOD'S Nature expressing itself to man in detail. "When men understand that the law of GOD, in its essence, is the Nature of GOD, they do not think lightly of sin; they do not think of an act of sin as of an act which has no consequences; they do not think of it as of a scar that heals in a few days, or as of a force which spends itself, or as of a colour that fades. They see that wilful sin necessarily empties the soul of GOD, and leaves it as the bed of the ocean might be without the waters that can fill it. They see that sin introduces a state, which does not terminate until it be reversed by an act as definite as the act which introduced it. They see that sin, as being the moral negation of GOD, is not a fancy of the human mind, but a real fact in the universe, and that to have sinned wilfully is, until a man repents, to be in a state of spiritual death."¹ With the exception, then, of the sinners against their own souls, who have incurred *the damnum*, the loss of GOD, I would pray for every soul of man, whether in the body or out of the body. With Dr. Pusey,² I

¹ Liddon. "Sermons preached on Special Occasions," *The victor in the times of Preparation*.

² *What is of Faith as to everlasting punishment*, p. 27.

conceive that, in the state after death, "a change in the soul, which should be short of the change between rejecting GOD and accepting Him, before the Day of Judgment, might be believed by anyone who yet believed in the everlasting loss of those who finally reject Him." I am, of course, not for the moment thinking of the heathen, actual or practical, who, in this life, have apparently never, with *all* the facts before them, found themselves in a position to make the irrevocable choice between acceptance or rejection of a GOD manifested to their consciences.

I am the more convinced that such is the case, when I recollect the very broad lines upon which our present Burial Office is drawn up. "Our own Church of England," says Bishop Forbes,¹ "deeply convinced that the general tone of the teaching of Antiquity goes beyond a mere prayer for the consummation of bliss both in body and soul, and probably extends to actual forgiveness of some sins (perhaps at the foreseen prayers of the Church), and the mitigation of some penalties, has formed her Burial Service on a theory of which this doctrine is the only interpretation; that words of hope may be used of all but the excommunicate."² Standing, as I do, so frequently in the ordinary course of my ministry, beside the open graves of so many unknown to me even by name, not to mention circumstances or character, I

¹ Bishop Forbes, *On the Articles*, ii. 347.

² It should, of course, be noted that the Church *pronounces no sentence* upon such as may not have her Burial Office said over their graves. She does not claim to judge "them that are without." She merely forbids a certain formulary being recited at their funerals. This formulary, most unhappily shorn, as it is, of all direct prayer for the deceased, must, I fear, be regarded as of more benefit to the survivors than to the dead. *They*, not the dead, suffer when its use is prohibited.

am *invariably* called upon to style the deceased in each case our "dear brother"; to "commit his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Kneeling before the Altar of the GOD "Who hath taught us (by His holy Apostle Saint Paul) not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in Him," I am *invariably* pleading with Him—there in the Holy Place of His CHRIST'S more immediate Presence—"that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him, as our hope is this our brother doth." The Church dares thus to express hope for practically all souls, even "a sure and certain hope." Why then, should *I* take upon myself to "judge before the time," and decide for how many or how few I may intercede with my GOD? "This is the important point—Is there any creature, whom CHRIST has taken into His arms in His own appointed rite of Baptism, for whom we can have absolutely no hope? We may have little or no hope of *his repentance*—though this is precisely what the popular theology is most hopeful about :

‘ Between the stirrup and the ground
He mercy sought and mercy found.’

But are we entitled to say, even of the worst of them, 'There is no hope for him *in his God*?' What right have we to set a limit to His infinite compassion? What right have we to anticipate the Day of Judgment, and pass our sentence on the dead? Perhaps we are told—we often are—that GOD is just as well as merciful. Our reply is that it is precisely *because God is just* that we venture to hope that He will take into account (as we cannot) hereditary taint—*atavism* it is sometimes called

—evil training, adverse influences, special temptations, secret motives, and a score of things that we know nothing of. . . . No, we dare not abandon hope, because we dare not put a limit either to the mercy or the equity of the Most High. Specially when we remember that His love for us does not cease when the breath leaves the body, and that the Good Shepherd goes after the lost sheep ‘*until He finds it.*’”¹ I doubt whether we are justified in placing any restrictions of our own inventing upon the infinite possibilities of the wonderful expression, “*until He finds it.*” Nor can I forget that from the same Divine lips I have the assurance, “In my FATHER’S house *are many mansions.*” “*Many,*”—yes, room for souls in *all* stages of strength and enlightenment. “There are some who take the ‘FATHER’S house’ to mean the whole kingdom of GOD, with its various spheres or states for those who are pressing on to perfection; some of these spheres or abiding-places in this world, in the various degrees of grace and service in the Church; some in the state between death and judgment; some in the final state, so that the removal of a soul from this scene is no more than the stepping out of one room into another in the same palace of the same Great King.”²

But, doubtless, first of all it will be objected, that the prayers of the Primitive Church on behalf of ‘*The Faithful*’ Departed, for the most part, only had reference to such objects as ‘*Rest,*’ ‘*Light,*’ ‘*Refreshment,*’ though, as we have already seen, *S. Paul’s* petition or ‘*aspiration*’ for Onesiphorus included in its scope *the very uttermost*, that could be postulated for *any* soul, viz.,

¹ Hammond. *Church or Chapel?* pp, 288-9.

² Sadler. *Commentary on S. John’s Gospel*; on xiv. 3.

'*Mercy in the Day of the Lord.*' Dean Luckock, in one of his quite standard works upon the subject in hand, has waded carefully through all the available evidence on this head, and demonstrates that there is little reference to *the pardon of sins* of the dead until S. Jerome's Day. Yet, even so, there are traces, here and there, of a fond, yearning, not always clearly defined, hope, that could not always be stifled to silence, that the souls of sinners—the finally impenitent always excepted—might be benefited, to some extent, by prayers on their behalf. For instance, Dean Luckock cites three passages from S. Chrysostom which certainly appear to lend support to this view. S. Cyril, also quoted by Dean Luckock, in his lecture on S. Peter's words, "Wherefore, laying aside all malice and all guile," says, "In like manner we too, offering our prayers for those who have fallen asleep, even though they be sinners. . . . offer CHRIST, Who was slain for our sins, that we may obtain His favour both for them and ourselves." With regard to this extract, the Dean observes—"It has been urged, however, by those who hold that even grievous and mortal sin may be forgiven in the Intermediate State, and it must be admitted that its general tenour, and especially the comparison of the exiled transgressors (certain persons banished by a king whom they had offended) favours such a theory."¹ S. Ambrose prayed for the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian, of whose final salvation he could scarcely have been assured. There is, too, the legend in the Acts of Perpetua, who suffered martyrdom in the persecution raised by the Emperor Severus, about A.D. 203. The story runs that in a vision

¹ *After Death*, p. 132. But see the whole discussion of the question on pp. 117 to 149.

she describes her brother, Dinocrates, in great distress owing to his being guilty of some grievous sin. She, therefore, prays for him, and sees him in light, purified and restored. In reference to this story S. Augustine¹ remarks, "He had gone into the damnation of death, and was only liberated through the prayer of his sister, who was about to die for CHRIST." Mere mythology, you say. Well, supposing it be so, at any rate it is the mythology of a very remote Antiquity, which, at all events, witnesses to the current belief in those early days as to what was possible to the prayer of love on behalf of those departed. Out of Dean Luckock's many quotations from the Primitive Liturgies, I merely transcribe two, one Eastern, one Western. This is from the Liturgy of S. John the Evangelist: "Thou art the Creator of the souls and bodies, and they, who have lain down in the grave, wait for Thee, and look to Thy life-giving hope. Awake them, O LORD, in that last day, and may Thy look towards them be tranquil, and of Thy mercy forgive their faults and failings, for none of those who have lived on earth can be found clean from the stains of sin." This is from the Sacramentary of S. Leo: "We pray that whatever stain he has contracted in his passage through the world may be wiped out by these Sacrifices." Did *our* Liturgy but contain suffrages *anything like* the above, we feel that we should be completely satisfied, and need ask no more. But without *any* such utterance of supplication for the sanctification of souls beyond the veil, how can we meet with success the taunt of the Roman controversialist, Möhler, that "Protestantism must either admit many into heaven stained with sin, or imagine that a magical change is wrought

¹ *De Anima*, i. 10.

merely by death"? Here is the conclusion, after examination of all the authorities, at which Dean Luckock¹ arrives: "The evidence of a few of the Fathers and the Primitive Liturgies is in favour of the view, which admits of the effacement after death of the stain and defilement of sin, as also of the forgiveness of those lesser faults and failings, which are due to human infirmity, and encourages the prayers of survivors as helpful in the attainment of both these ends." He adds that "the general testimony is decidedly adverse" to prayers for "the man who dies in wilful sin." With those few Fathers and with the Faithful at whose Altars were recited the litanies of those few Primitive Liturgies, I, for one, speaking, subject to correction, for my own part only, would associate myself in the most heartfelt sympathy.

It will further be objected that the Primitive Church, as a rule, only prayed for '*The Faithful*' Departed. Well, it *does* appear that *the majority*, when speaking with exactitude, did regard such intercessions as only applicable to the cases of such as had died in the true Faith of GOD'S Holy Name. Yes, but who is to decide to-day who *are* '*the Faithful*' amongst the Departed? Surely "GOD is Judge Himself." (Ps. l. 6.) Of course, in estimating the practice of the Primitive Church as compared with the practice of modern times, the wide difference of circumstances in the two cases cannot be ignored. In those early days discipline was universally enforced, and that discipline was a real factor to be reckoned with in ecclesiastical life. Nowadays—certainly in our own branch of the Church Catholic—discipline for the laity is not very generally exercised. Year after

¹ *After Death*, pp. 148, 149.

year the English Church puts into the mouths of her priests the historical statement and the pious aspiration, "Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a godly discipline, that, at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin, were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the LORD. . . . Instead whereof, until the said discipline may be restored again (which is much to be wished) it is thought good. . . ." But the centuries come and go—whilst I write another century is fast ebbing away—and we hardly appear to be perceptibly nearer the consummation of this devout anticipation. On the other hand, in the Primitive Church—with her borders sharply defined as against the borders of the world—it was a simple enough matter for the line to be drawn between those souls departed, for whom prayers might lawfully be offered, and those of whom no commemorations might be made in the Holy Mysteries. For such as were publicly known to be excommunicate there could be no public intercessions under the then conditions. "*Extra Ecclesiam nulla* ¹ *Salus!*" Yes, in the days in which the Church was as

¹ "The notion that no grace is given outside the visible Church is not an opinion merely, but a heresy, decidedly contradicting the Scriptural statement, "Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum." Wisd. i. 7. De Lugo, who quotes S. Thomas, replies to the objection that "Jews or heathen might be saved through supernatural faith in one GOD, while invincibly ignorant of CHRIST, and therefore no Christians," that "such a person must not be called 'no Christian,' for, though not visibly received into the Church, he has yet inwardly and formally had one faith with the Church, habitual and actual, and in GOD's sight will be numbered among Christians." (*De Fid.* xii. 3.) Suarez similarly says that by virtue of *implicit* faith in CHRIST, of whom he is invincibly ignorant, an unbaptized man "may have the solemn purpose, at least implicit, of Baptism, which suffices."

an armed camp in the midst of an hostile country, Society could be viewed as outwardly and visibly divided into the subjects of this or that kingdom, the kingdom of Light or the kingdom of Darkness. The world was to the men of that age but a small world, comparatively speaking. Whole continents, over which heathenism reigned, and still reigns supreme, were unknown to their text-books of geography. "*Outside the Church, no salvation!*" Yes, but "*the Church*," one and indivisible, witnessing everywhere to the same Faith, holding to the same traditions of universal obligation, was a very concrete, unmistakeable phenomenon in those days; whereas to-day, who *is* "outside the Church," for who does not perfectly conscientiously style his pet own Shibboleth "the Church," to the virtual exclusion of all his neighbour's pet Shibboleths? "*Outside the Church, no salvation!*" Yes, but in those days, to stand outside of the City of GOD, a citizen of the realm of thick darkness that might be felt, was deliberately, with both eyes open, to reject unquestioned and unquestionable Truth. Nowadays, when "the Church" is at least professedly co-terminous with the world—except in non-Christian countries—it would surely be the height of presumption for *any individual* to take upon himself or herself to decide, *motu proprio*, whether this man or that woman ought to be treated after the fashion of one excommunicate. As things are, then, I, for one, have no hesitation in offering my prayers for *all* souls of *all* men, excepting always such as die in a

(*De Fid.* xii. 4.) The Church has always recognised 'the baptism of desire,' as well as 'the baptism of water and of blood.'" From *Catholic Eschatology*, by H. N. Oxenham, M.A., p. 26. *Footnote.* The above words are significant, as emanating from a Roman Catholic source.

state of mortal sin. If there still linger any scruple in any Christian conscience, then he or she may set all doubts at rest, by adopting the method of good Bishop Heber,¹ in commending his dead to GOD'S mercy. "Only," he says, "this caution I always endeavour to observe—that I beg His forgiveness at the same time for myself, if unknowingly I am too presumptuous, and His grace, lest I, who am thus solicitous for *others*, should neglect the appointed means of my own salvation." To this testimony I am fain to add the testimony of Heber's present successor, Dr. Welldon, Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India: "It is reasonable to believe that the souls, which enter upon the future state with the taint of sin clinging to them, in whatever form or degree, will be slowly cleansed by a disciplinary or purificatory process, from whatever it is that, being evil in itself, obstructs or obscures the Vision of GOD. From the doctrine of the Communion of Saints flows the spiritual sympathy, of which intercessory prayer is the expression between the living and the dead. And this is the benediction of human nature—to feel that, as souls upon earth are fortified and elevated by the prayers offered for them in the unseen world, so, too, by our prayers may the souls which have passed behind the veil be lifted higher and higher into the knowledge and contemplation and fruition of GOD. The Festival of All Souls is a Commemoration which enriches and ennobles humanity."

The mention of India, the land of the present writer's birth, reminds him at once of the millions upon millions of heathens, with respect to whose Hereafter he feels constrained to add a few words before closing this.

¹ *Diary of a Lady of quality*, p. 196.

chapter. What does it seem possible for us to hope concerning their destiny in the world to come? From a tract of the American Board of Missions, on "The Great Motive to Missionary Effort," in his *Mercy and Judgment*, Dean Farrar quotes the following words:—"The heathen. . . . are expressly doomed to perdition. Six hundred millions of deathless souls on the brink of Hell! What a spectacle!" I, for one, can only regard such a wild suggestion as an unintentional blasphemy against the love of GOD. For, from the point of view of the writer of the tract in question, these millions, if they have perished, will have perished why? Hosts of them through no fault of their own, but simply because Christendom has as yet been too selfish or too slothful to carry to them the Gospel of GOD'S great salvation. I cannot believe that one man—even one out of a whole race from Adam to the sounding of the Trump of Doom—shall ever be damned for another man's sin. On the contrary, as has already been insisted upon more than once, I cannot fail to gather that, wherever threats are used in the Bible, those threats are addressed to apostates, not to pagans; they are warnings rather to me, the enlightened Christian, than to my brother or sister, the unenlightened idolater. Consequently I learn that *the* one sin which can find pardon "neither in this world nor in that which is to come" is blasphemy against the HOLY GHOST upon the lips of men and women, who have been sealed by that self-same Spirit unto the day of redemption; not ignorance of the very existence of the awful Paraclete on the part of souls, "who have not so much as heard whether there be any HOLY GHOST."

Commonly, I believe, there is one *locus classicus* cited

as covering the cases of *all* the heathen. But, in point of fact, that passage can only be said strictly to embrace a certain percentage amongst the millions upon millions of pagans. "When the Gentiles, which have no law, *do by nature the things contained in the law*, these having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they shew *the work of the law* written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them; in the day when GOD shall judge the secrets of men, according to my Gospel, by JESUS CHRIST." (*Rom. ii. 14, 15, 16.*) Upon reflection, it is evident that in this place of Scripture only *the more enlightened* amongst the heathen can be contemplated; only such, that is, as "*do by nature the things contained in the law.*" But the great mass of the heathen, we know, could not by any stretch of the imagination be thought to be doing "by nature the things contained in the law." On the contrary, such nations and tribes of savages "have wrought the desire of the Gentiles," and "have *walked in* lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries." (1 *S. Pet. iv. 3.*) They have habitually "walked in," not merely at times under temptation committed, gross and mortal sins. Their whole attitude, though unconsciously, has been one of opposition and contradiction to GOD'S Commandments, and, therefore, to GOD'S true Nature. There appears to be, in S. Peter's mind, a studied contrast, expressed by the use of two distinct Greek words, between GOD'S "will" and the heathen's "wish." The latter are the creatures of blind, unthinking impulse, the sport of a rout of passions running riot within them. Nevertheless these who so "walk," it is stated by the Apostle, "shall

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give account to Him, that is ready to judge both the quick and the dead."

Hereupon follows the text (1 *S. Peter* iv. 6), already alluded to, which declares that "the Gospel was preached even to the dead." Now what does S. Peter mean here by the antithesis between "judgment in the flesh" and "life in the spirit?" For surely there *is* a marked antithesis. Side by side, then, with this passage let us place another, which seems an exact parallel, and also refers to a man, who had likewise transgressed mortally in the flesh.

"With the power of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to deliver such an one unto Satan *for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD JESUS.*" (1 *Cor.* v. 5.)

"For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, that they might *be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*" (1 *S. Peter* iv. 6.)

"A close parallel (to 1 *S. Peter* iv. 6) may be found in 1 *Cor.* v. 5. There S. Paul judges to deliver to Satan (Is he the warder of the 'prison' where such spirits are confined?) a person who has foully sinned in the flesh, 'for annihilation¹ of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD JESUS.' . . . Now why, in these two cases, do the writers take pains to point the antithesis between 'flesh' and 'spirit,' if, after all, the flesh is to share the mercy shewn to the spirit? The antithesis becomes a false one. Why did not S. Paul

¹ Bishop Ellicott remarks on 1 *Cor.* v. 5: "It was the design of the judicial act to destroy that which formed, as it were, the substratum of sensual sin, and thus to save that which was the substratum of the higher life, and the medium of communication with the HOLY SPIRIT. Satan thus becomes the unconscious and overruled agent for good. What is destroyed is not an integral part of man, but that additious part, in which sensual sin made its abode, and which, even in its own simple and material nature, could not inherit the kingdom of God." (1 *Cor.* xv. 50.)

say, 'To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that he may be saved in the day of the LORD JESUS?' and S. Peter, 'For this cause was the Gospel preached to the dead also, that, though judged indeed in flesh, they might, after all, live according to GOD?' And what is the point of this dread warning, if in the end these Antediluvians attain to the same bliss, 'both in body and soul,' as other men? . . . So it would be the simplest explanation of our present text (1 *S. Peter* iv. 6), if we might believe that these Antediluvians were to be deprived of resurrection of the flesh, which they had so foully corrupted, but in GOD'S mercy, through accepting the Gospel preached to them by CHRIST after their death, were to be allowed a purely spiritual existence. They would thus be sentenced 'according to men,' i.e., from a human point of view: they would be unable to take their place again among the glorified human species in a human life; but still they would be alive 'according to GOD,' from GOD'S point of view—a divine life, but 'in the spirit' only . . . When it says 'the Gospel was preached to the dead *also*,' it implies a similar preaching to others, viz., to the heathen who were to 'give account,' and that the result of the preaching would be the same. Those heathen, who through ignorance lived corrupt lives all around, might possibly, in the Intermediate State, hope to receive a Gospel, which would enable a bare half of their humanity to live according to GOD hereafter. It could not avert the destruction of their flesh."† The Author gives the above suggestions for what they are worth. He does

† Prof. A. J. Mason in *New Testament Commentary*, edited by Bishop Ellicott, on 1 *S. Peter* iv. 6.

not, of course, for a moment dispute the absolute truth of that Article of the Creed of Christendom, which affirms, "At Whose (CHRIST'S) coming *all* men shall rise again *with their bodies* : and shall give account for their own works." But certainly there *are* passages in the New Testament which would seem to imply that the *permanent* restoration of life *after the Judgment to the body* is not promised to *all*, though all must rise "with their bodies to give account for their own works." For instance, our LORD says of the man, who eats His Flesh and drinks His Blood, "I will raise him up at the last day." (S. John vi. 54.) Again, S. Paul will bear the loss of all things, if he, "by any means may attain unto the resurrection *from* the dead." (Phil. iii. 11.) "The 'resurrection *from* the dead' is the final resurrection of the righteous to a new and glorified life. This meaning, which the context requires, is implied by the form of expression. The general resurrection of the dead, whether good or bad, is 'the resurrection *of* the dead' (e.g., 1 Cor. xv. 42); on the other hand the resurrection of CHRIST and of those, who rise with CHRIST, is generally 'the resurrection *from* the dead.'" ¹ (S. Luke xx. 35; Acts iv. 2; 1 S. Peter i. 3.) The word used here is not the simple but a compound form, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

Once more I cannot but insist upon what seems a postulate with a righteous GOD, namely, that the only souls, for whom we dare express no hope, must be those, "*who knowing the ordinance of God, that they, which practise such things* (S. Paul's ghastly catalogue of abominations committed by those, 'who hold the truth in unrighteousness') are worthy of death, not only do

¹ Bishop Lightfoot *in loc.*

the same, but also consent with them that practise them." (*Rom.* i. 32.) But for "those out of the way," those in total or partial ignorance of GOD's true Self, there will be, there must be, the most merciful consideration shewn in the day of account. "The times of *ignorance* GOD overlooked"—and for the heathen world the times are still the "times of ignorance"—"but now He commandeth men, that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world *in righteousness*." (*Acts* xvii. 30, 31.) So declared S. Paul to the men of Athens. But the same S. Paul also witnessed to the Romans, "The same LORD is LORD *of all*, and is rich *unto all* that call upon Him: for whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved." Yes, the cry of the penitent is always and everywhere accepted in the sight of the All-Father: but, pursues S. Paul, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (*Rom.* x. 12-15.) True, "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto GOD," but, "he that cometh to GOD *must believe* that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them *that seek after Him*." (*Heb.* xi. 6.) "The faith which is thus declared to be necessary for everyone who approaches GOD as a worshipper, includes two elements, the belief (*a*) that GOD is, and (*b*) that He is morally active; in other words, it is a faith in the existence and in the moral government of GOD."¹ But to the millions upon millions of the heathen "without a preacher" such a GOD so governing is unheard of, unknown.

Now, I have it on no less an authority than that of the

¹ Bishop Westcott *in loc.*

Truth Himself that "that servant, which *knew* his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes: but he that *knew not*, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes." (*S. Luke* xii. 47, 48.)

"I know that the wrath Divine, when most severe,
Makes justice still the guide of His career,
And will not punish in one mingled crowd
Those without light and those without a cloud."

The same Divine voice has pronounced, that it will be "*more tolerable* for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah," than for those, who shall have refused to listen to the preacher of repentance expressly sent with a mission to their souls. Yet the deeds of Sodom and Gomorrah were such as to render it necessary for GOD to make their inhabitants "an ensample unto those that should live ungodly." (2 *S. Peter* ii. 6.) "More tolerable!" In the presence of infinite Power and infinite Love, what may not be implied in this "more tolerable"? "In regard to the heathen, apart from Theology, the three simple words of the Psalmist 'teacheth man knowledge,' tell us of an universal teaching of mankind, the whole race of man individually, man by man, by the Spirit of GOD. GOD the HOLY GHOST (it is matter of faith) visits and has visited every soul of man, whom GOD has made, and those who heard His voice and obeyed it, so far as they knew, belonged to CHRIST, and were saved for His merits, Whom, had they known, they would have obeyed and loved. He Himself enlightens them, as *S. John* says, 'In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men;' of all *men* that Life was, is, and ever will be the Light; 'the Life of GOD in the soul of men.' . . .

But that light has shone, and shines, very unequally among those on whom the light of the Gospel has not shone. We are then wholly ignorant of the rule,¹ by

¹ "If we take our LORD's teaching as to the law by which He judges in S. Matt. xxv. 32 in its literal and natural sense, we have the truth that He judges *the nations of the heathen world* ('*all the nations*' as distinct from the literal or spiritual Israel) according as they have, in their ignorance of the full significance of what they did, obeyed or resisted *the law of kindness* written in their hearts." Plumptre. *Spirits in Prison*, pp. 163, 164. "'Before Him shall be gathered all nations.'" (S. Matt. xxv. 32.) Better, *all the nations*, or even better, *all the Gentiles*. The word is that which, when used as here, with the Article, marks out, with scarcely an exception, *the heathen nations of the world*, as distinguished from God's people Israel (as, e.g., Rom. xv. 11, 12; Eph. ii. 11). The word, thus taken, serves as the key to the distinctive teaching that follows. We have had in this chapter (1) in the wise and foolish virgins, the law of judgment for all members of the Church of CHRIST; (2) in the talents, that for all, who hold any office or ministry in the Church; now we have (3) the law by which those shall be judged, who have lived and died as heathen, not knowing the Name of CHRIST, and knowing God only as revealed in nature or in the law written in their hearts. Every stage in what follows, confirms this interpretation." Plumptre: on S. Matthew's Gospel in *New Testament Commentary* for English readers, edited by Bishop Ellicott. Alford remarks on S. Matt. xxv. 32: "The expression implies *all the nations of the world*, as distinguished from the *Eclectoi* already gathered to Him, just as the Gentiles were by that name distinguished from His chosen people the Jews. Among these are 'the other sheep which He has, not of this fold.' (S. John x. 16.) '*He shall separate,*' etc. (See Ezek. xxxiv. 17.) The *sheep* are those referred to in Rom. ii. 7, 10—the '*goats*' in vv. 8, 9, where this same *judgment according to works* is spoken of." On vv. 37-40 Alford observes, "The answer of these '*Righteous*' appears to me to shew plainly (as Olshausen and Stier interpret it), that they are *not* to be understood as being the covenanted servants of CHRIST. . . . But *these* who are the judged, *know not* that all their deeds of love have been done *to and for Christ*—they are overwhelmed with the sight of the grace, which has been working in and for them, and the glory, which is now their blessed portion."

The following eloquent sentences from the pen of Canon H. Scott-Holland admirably illustrate and enforce the above statements: "There is the outermost ring of that dim heathen

which they will be judged. What would be heavy sin in us, may be none in them ; we cannot tell how far the exposure of infants may be a sin in China, unless GOD by His secret voice appeal to any individual parent against the hereditary custom, or cannibalism in a nation of cannibals . . . With the actual heathen far out of reach of the Gospel, must be counted a large portion of the poor, which the Church has lost in large cities, as London and Paris, on whose souls the light of the Gospel never shone. London is alas ! in all probability, one of the largest heathen cities in the world, and very many of its inhabitants will be judged, we must suppose, by the same law as the heathen in China and Japan. 'GOD will' in the great Day, S. Paul says, 'judge the secrets of men by JESUS CHRIST according to my Gospel.' (*Rom. ii. 16.*) The very terms forbid *our* judging, since they are the *secrets*¹ of the heart, which

world which has been brought nigh, in the risen CHRIST, to the FATHER Which is in heaven, and is ever beloved for His sake, Who has made Himself theirs ; and thither, amid the thick of those dark swarms, the blessed love of GOD, that must otherwise despair, moves under the drawing of the brotherhood in CHRIST ; and still it whispers hope among those without hope ; and still urges, and still beseeches ; and still it lets a face be seen as of GOD, and a voice still be heard among the trees of the garden. And they, even they, amid ugly and foul confusions, are not insensible to that strange stirring, which is the movement within them of the resurrection—a movement blind, yet prophetic—prompting them to deeds which CHRIST will yet own as His at the last day, though they be done by those who will ask in ignorant surprise, 'LORD, when saw we Thee hungered, we who on earth never knew Thy Name?'" Sermon X., *The Solidarity of Salvation, in Creed and Character*, pp. 154, 155.

¹ The following remarks of Dr. Martineau, respecting the doctrine of a Hell and a Heaven, and the distribution of men into two classes as good or bad in accordance merely with *their external actions*, are certainly noteworthy: "This doctrine, seemingly so harsh in itself and so impossible to confront with

GOD will judge.”¹ This being so, why should I not kneel me down, and plead with my GOD as fearlessly for mercy on the souls of the actual heathen as on the souls of multitudes of my countrymen and countrywomen who may be virtual heathens, though not, necessarily, *wilful* reprobates and *conscious* apostates?

In my utter ignorance, then, of the righteous law, in accordance with which the several responsibilities of the several men and women at GOD’S bar of justice will be adjudicated upon—and, be it remembered, there are scarcely two individuals whose circumstances are similar in all respects—I will continue to pray, with good Bishop Andrewes: ²

“Remember, O LORD our GOD,
All spirits and *all* flesh,

Which we have remembered, and which we have not.”

For I cannot but feel that the scope of prayer—especially the purest prayer, of which I am capable,

experience, has by no means been a mere favourite with the rude multitude: it has had the most powerful hold of minds capacious, philosophical, harmonious, and devout; and has rarely failed to throw its awful shadow across the holiest souls. Evaded and explained away by mediocre men and in rationalistic times, it is gazed at with a full face by a Plato, a Dante, a Milton, a Pascal; and surely has no ambiguous expression in the records of our faith, and is referred by them to the Christian’s supreme authority. How is this contradiction to be resolved? I reply: by turning from the outward to the internal look of moral evil. It is when we contemplate its external phenomena and manifestations, when we critically sort out the aspects of human character as objects of natural history, that we find ourselves in endless intricacies of classification. It is not, however, from the scene around us that we learn the nature of right and wrong: but from our own self-consciousness.”—J. Martineau, D.D., LL.D., in *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 61.

¹ Pusey. *What is of Faith as to everlasting punishment*, pp. 8, 9, 10.

² *Preces Privatae. Diei quartae.*

that is unselfish prayer, prayers for others than myself—must be co-extensive with the infinite possibilities of "the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge."

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring,
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

Hopeless, you insist, such all-embracing intercession?
How know you or I? For myself, prostrate at the
footstool of very Almightyness, and very Omniscience,

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry,"

I have tried to take, as at least my ideal of devotion,
this rule, and nothing short of this rule :

"Be not afraid to pray!—to pray is right—
Pray (if thou canst), with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay!
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light!
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see."

CHAPTER X.

THE PLEA OF A PLAIN PAROCHUS FOR SOME RESTORATION OF PUBLIC PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED.

"IT is certainly open to any English Churchman, with entire loyalty to the Church, to make such remembrance of the dead in his *private* prayers. It would be *hard indeed*, if it were otherwise—if the name, which for long years had found a place in our daily prayers, were *suddenly to be blotted out, and to be mentioned no more*, because our loved ones had passed into the waiting world of the dead. *Such prayers have been in use in the Christian Church from the earliest times.*" Here are some words uttered quite recently (1898) by the present Archbishop of York. Surely it did one's heart good to hear an Anglican Primate of to-day courageously defending a custom so venerable, and, therefore, so Catholic, as intercessions on behalf of the departed. But the present writer—probably in company with many others of the Faithful throughout England—was not a little surprised to note, that the archiepiscopal apology was to a large extent neutralized and discounted by the novel limitation of supplication for souls beyond the veil to a Christian's "*private* prayers." We are more than thankful to have the indisputable fact re-asserted by such a high authority that, "such prayers have been in use in the Christian Church from the earliest times." But, we are bound to ask, *how know we* this unquestionable fact? *Upon what evidence*

do we rely, in making an historical statement to this effect? We cannot, of course, ascertain, much less disclose to the vulgar gaze, the sacred confidences that passed between Christians "in the earliest times" and their GOD, when, one by one, they bent the knee to pour out their whole hearts before "the FATHER which seeth in secret." The only testimony we can produce, in support of our affirmation of the fact, must be *published utterances* in favour of the practice in question, to be read and known of all men, in the speeches and writings of the then leaders of thought, and, particularly, in the terms of the then *common worship*, as revealed in the several Primitive Liturgies. It would, therefore, be a perfectly safe pronouncement to make, that "prayers for the dead have been in use *in public worship* in the Christian Church from the earliest times." On the other hand—*apart from the evidence we possess concerning the custom of public prayer for the dead from the age of the Catacombs downwards*—would it be as safe a pronouncement to make that "prayers for the dead have been used *by Christians in private* from the earliest times," seeing that the following is a direct command of the CHRIST to the Christian: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy FATHER?" (*S. Matt.* vi. 6.) No doubt Christians in "the earliest times" *did* remember the dead *in their private devotions*, but our reason for inferring that they did so, must be because we know as a fact that such was their habit *in their public worship*. If Antiquity is to be cited at all in support of prayers for the dead, logically you must admit, that such evidence as we can conceivably have to go upon, is evidence in favour rather of public than private intercession for souls

in the Intermediate State of being. Supposing to-day prayers for the dead were to be rigidly excluded from all our formularies of united devotion, though still retained by some in the secrecy of their closets, in a thousand years' time from to-day would it be possible for our posterity to demonstrate, that prayers for the dead were offered in the English Church in the year of our LORD 1900, *as clearly* as it is possible for *us* to demonstrate that prayers for the dead were in use in the English Church in the year of our LORD 900? The Archbishop's reference to the witness of Antiquity must inevitably prove more than His Grace seems willing to concede.

But what one feels so acutely is this. It would be indeed hard, if the name, which for long years had found a place in our daily prayers, were to be suddenly blotted out and to be mentioned no more—just at the very time of all times, when that name necessarily is most in our thoughts, just at the time when, with, it may be, a tear standing in our eyes, a throb pulsating at our heart's core, we have confessed, "*I believe in the Communion of Saints.*" It is precisely *then*, when each soul meets GOD, not as an unit, but as a son or daughter of the Family of the All-Father of Spirits, it is precisely *then*, when, if ever,

" Brother clasps the hand of brother,"

in the realization, however imperfect, of the comradeship of each and every member of the Church Militant, the Church Quiescent, the Church Triumphant—it is precisely *then* that my whole heart yearns to name the name, which for years back has occurred and recurred

in my daily devotions: it is precisely *then* that there rise before my misted eyes the images of

“Those angel faces
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”

To me, therefore—and, I imagine, to many others also—it feels something like a cruelty to tell me that the House of my FATHER is the only place in the world in which I may not implead the sacred Name, “in which the whole family in heaven and earth is named,” on behalf of my beloved, out of sight indeed, but nowhere less than *there* out of mind.

For, after all, is there, or is there not, any *special* blessing attached to *public* as distinguished from *private* prayer? If there really be no peculiar benediction promised to the former, then what can be the meaning of the declaration of the Master Himself: “I say unto you, that if *two* of you shall *agree* on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My FATHER, which is in heaven. For where two or three *are gathered together* in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” (*S. Matt.* xviii. 19, 20.) Now if there be two—say the father and mother of a dead child—who “agree on earth” with regard to praying for the repose and purification of the soul of their darling, surely they possess, as Christians, an inalienable right to be allowed to claim the fulfilment of the specific assurance, given by the LORD in person, to such as are “gathered together” to call upon His Name unitedly.

Of course, when we come to recall to mind the actual expressions of the thoughts of such as have, in all ages, confessed to a sense of yearning to be permitted to intercede with GOD for their dear dead, has not generally

that yearning uttered itself in the confidence that the spirits of the departed are with us, and we with them, in no place and at no time so consciously as in Church and at the hour of prayer, more especially of prayer during the solemn Celebration of the Holy Eucharist? Take, for example, the following quotation out of many that might be cited, from "*The Anaphora*" of the Divine Liturgy¹ of S. James :

"It is verily meet and right, fitting and due, to praise Thee, to hymn Thee, to bless Thee, to worship Thee, to glorify Thee, to give thanks to Thee, Who madest all creation, visible and invisible; the Treasure of eternal goods, the Fountain of life and immortality, the God and Master of all things, Whom heaven and the heaven of heavens hymn, and all their powers: the sun and the moon, and all the choir of the stars; the earth, the sea, and all that is in them; Jerusalem the celestial assembly, the Church of the First-born written in heaven; the spirits of just men and of Prophets; the souls of Martyrs and Apostles; Angels, Archangels, thrones, dominations, principalities, virtues and the tremendous powers; . . ."

Indeed, it is an universal, indestructible principle of Christian worship that in "the great congregation," more than anywhere else, owing to our then actualization of the Communion of Saints, we join with the Spirit-World in the sympathy of adoration. Even Puritanism has not been able to eradicate altogether out of the Common Prayer Book this sense of our oneness, in the Services of the Sanctuary, with the unnumbered hosts of bodiless existences beyond the veil of sense. In the *Te Deum* remains to this day intact the association with us of "the goodly fellowship of the Prophets," and of "the noble army of Martyrs." In the *Benedicite* we

¹ Neale. *Translations of the Primitive Liturgies*, p. 49.

still chant, "O ye spirits and souls of the righteous; O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the LORD; praise Him, and magnify Him for ever." Before the Altar we are still invited to sing our *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus* in chorus with "Angels and Archangels, and all the company of heaven." After all, Dr. Neale but expresses the sentiments of "the holy Church throughout all the world" in the dear familiar verses:—

"They, whose course on earth is o'er,
Think they of their brethren more?
They before the throne who bow,
Feel they for their brethren now?

"Those whom many a land divides,
Many mountains, many tides,
Have they with each other part,
Fellowship of heart with heart?

"Each to each may be unknown,
Wide apart their lots be thrown;
Diff'ring tongues their lips may speak,
One be strong, and one be weak;—

"Yet in Sacrament and prayer
Each with other hath a share;
Hath a share in tear and sigh,
Watch, and fast, and litany.

"Saints departed even thus
Hold communion still with us;
Still with us beyond the veil
Praising, pleading without fail."

No, it is unhistorical as well as unnatural to tell us, that our prayers for the dead must be limited to our *private* devotions.

Under present circumstances, is it, then, to be wondered at, that some priests of the English Church, feeling that the Common Prayer Book is somewhat wanting in respect of commemoration of the departed, have at-

tempted to supply the deficiency in the way of *Secreta*, interpolated at certain points in the Office of Holy Communion? For lawless, traitorous folk, who should pervert to Rome in order to the satisfaction of their aspirations in this matter, such clergy have been widely stigmatized, not only by the proverbial "man in the street" and by the manufacturer of ecclesiastical crises, but also, on some occasions, by justly venerated Authorities in the Church our Mother. For instance, the present writer recollects how, some few years ago, an eminent English Bishop used some strong language concerning such of his clergy as were in the habit of employing "Altar Cards" at the Holy Eucharist, which contained, amongst other things, the ancient commendations to GOD'S mercy of the souls of the departed. For the benefit of the uninitiated, let us glance at the *ipsissima verba* of one such *Secretum*, partly from the Sarum Missal, interpolated by an Anglican Celebrant immediately after the Prayer of Consecration.

"Wherefore, O Holy FATHER, we having in remembrance His bitter Passion, and also His glorious Resurrection and His throne at Thy right Hand, do celebrate and make before Thee the memorial which He commanded, and humbly we beseech Thee that by the coming of Thy HOLY SPIRIT upon us, and upon these Thy undefiled gifts, there may in them be fulfilled unto us the living and salutary word of Thy well-beloved SON. Make all one in the Communion of the HOLY GHOST, one with other, who here and in every place and time partake of the one bread and chalice, that none may receive unto judgment the holy Body and Blood of Thy CHRIST, nor ever come into condemnation, being passed from death unto life. Remember also N. Thy servant, who hath gone before us with the sign of faith and sleeps the sleep of peace. To him, O LORD, with all that rest in CHRIST, give place of

refreshment, light, and peace, where the brightness of Thy countenance is lifted up on them, and sorrow and sighing are fled away. To us also Thy servants vouchsafe a portion with Thy holy ones, with John, Stephen, Timotheus . . . of whose blessed company we pray to be made sharers in joyful lowliness, . . ."¹

Here you have a fairly large importation into the most solemn part of the Anglican Communion Office. On reading over the words of the above extract, I can well imagine some such petulant ejaculations as the following escaping the lips of your average Protestant Britisher: "Just like their impertinence! The fad, this addition, of some mediævalistic curate, just out of his 'teens!" But, my imaginary critic, you are wrong this time. As a matter of fact, the passage in question occurs in an interleaved Prayer Book, belonging to the late Edward White Benson,² sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, who similarly interpolates portions of the ancient Liturgies, not only at this point, but also, amongst other places, at the oblation of the elements, besides introducing the *Benedictus qui venit*, and the Christmas Day Gospel, anciently recited by the priest at the conclusion of every Mass said by him. If an Archbishop of Canterbury found the Anglican Office lacking in some respects—notably with regard to prayers for the dead—

¹ Since penning the above sentences, the author has had the pleasure of meeting the compiler himself of Archbishop Benson's *Prayers Public and Private*. In reply to the question whether his father did habitually interpolate the words quoted, as a *Secretum*, when celebrating the Holy Eucharist, the Rev. Hugh Benson assured the writer that he distinctly remembered hearing the late Archbishop repeat to him, during a certain walk taken together, the whole passage cited, *word for word, as quite familiar to him from constant use*.

² See his *Prayers Public and Private*, pp. 174, 175.

some of us amongst the inferior clergy, who also find it so lacking, at any rate err in good company.

The question here naturally arises, whether the present is quite the time, in which to endeavour to limit commemorations of the departed to people's private devotions; whether the attempt to do so is not, in fact, to run counter to the temper of the age, in which our lot is cast. Unquestionably the English Church has more than once in her history failed to interpret, and respond to the felt—even if sometimes clumsily and inadequately expressed—instincts of the English nation, oftentimes, as in this instance, because a certain amount of noisy opposition to the general tendency of public sentiment has to be encountered in some quarters. Such failures on her part to read the signs of the times are sure to turn out disastrous. With us, revolutions in religious opinion, if not regulated by the authority that naturally belongs to the Mother Church of the country, generally stand in danger of degenerating into mere vulgar sensationalism, if not positive heresy, certain in the long run to be crystalized into the creed of a new sect or sects. And surely the popular craze nowadays, even extending to the remotest rustic 'Bethel' or 'Mount Gilead,' for so-called 'Memorial Services'¹ does constitute

¹ With regard to the question of the *legality* of 'Memorial Services,' in our Churches, the following remarks of the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P., are perhaps worth noting here: "As I am on that point (technical breaches of the law by non-compliance with the letter of the Rubrics), may I mention some other difficulties of the same kind? The Prayer Book, after all, was compiled more than 300 years ago, and the growth and practice of modern society do make some changes in it necessary, or make it almost necessary that some latitude should be given to those who conduct the Services of the Church. For example, many of you may have attended, as I have often done, at memorial funeral Services held in a Church, not at the place

a revolution in British religious opinion : nay more, *does* point to a *radical* change of attitude and habit, and that with regard to a subject, upon which, for generations back, the most inveterate of prejudices has declined to listen to a syllable, that conflicted with its own irreformable judgment concerning the question at issue. True, one's innate sense of reverence and decorum is frequently shocked by *the form* assumed by some of the 'Memorial Services' in vogue amongst us to-day : but the phenomenon is there, and has come to stay, even if in a debased shape—the outward and visible expression, that is, of a yearning to be allowed to commemorate by name a deceased brother or sister in the Sanctuary, in the more immediate presence of the Father of Spirits. The hymns, in particular, sung on many an occasion of the kind, are no doubt of a purely subjective and highly emotional character, but they are none the less the outpourings of hearts reaching out beyond the veil in the

where the burial is being conducted, but elsewhere, for the convenience of mourning friends, who are not able to attend at the funeral itself. I cannot imagine a practice which has done more to enable people to show in a touching fashion their feelings for their departed friends. It is technically illegal, I believe, and if you are merely going on technicalities, if you are going to change the living government of the Church into a government simply by the action of a lay magistrate, I suppose he would find himself compelled to punish a breach of the law of that kind as he would the very different, and I agree, much more serious infraction of the law, of which you make just complaint."—*Reply given to a Deputation of various Protestant Associations at the Carlton Club, Manchester, on Saturday, September 29th, 1900.* If, one cannot help asking, a fancy 'Memorial Service' may be permitted as a merely 'technical illegality,' why not also a *Requiem* Eucharist, unless, indeed—as seems to be in effect the contention of some amongst us—you may take what liberties you like with the Prayer Book, *provided only your pet liberty either runs counter to, or widely differs from, the traditional and universal usage of Catholic Christendom?*

direction of the soul embarked upon its solitary voyage across the frontiers of Time. Protest as you like to the contrary, but the instinct at the bottom of a Wesleyan or a Congregationalist 'Memorial Service' is the instinct at the bottom of a *Requiem* Eucharist. Some day or other we shall suddenly awake to discover that, this matter, at any rate, the proverbial 'Extremes meet.'

"I believe in the Communion of Saints." In point of fact, of course, such a very general feeling after, however darkly, the truth, which is enshrined in this long forgotten Article of the Creed of the ages, is but one evidence of the recoil of the national conscience from the pitiless Pharisaism of a now discredited Calvinism fulminating its arbitrary sentences to damnation against nine out of every ten of the human family. It is but recently that, as a whole, Englishmen have awoken, as out of a bad nightmare, to realize that it is at least conceivable that GOD'S heart is big enough to embrace a race instead of a mere sect. "A flat Arminian, though he hath not wit to know it, *wounds Christ through the heart* by maintaining universal redemption, and that CHRIST shed His Blood for all men, *a thing which never entered into the heart of Christ!*" Such was one of the heinous offences charged against William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, by a certain preacher before the Commons of England assembled in the Church of S. Margaret, at Westminster. To-day who is adjudged to have been in the right—Laud or his critic? To-day the language of Laud is the language of every heart that utters itself in speech. We have come, in our generation, to hope, that in every man, *quâ* man, and in every woman, *quâ* woman, there is a substratum of good at the

bottom, however overlaid with the dust and mire of carnality and worldliness.

"God scatters love on every side
Freely among His children all,
And always hearts are lying open wide,
Wherein some grains may fall.

"There is no wind but soweth seeds
Of a more true and open life,
Which burst, unlooked for, into high-souled deeds
With wayside beauty rife.

"All that hath been majestical
In life or death, since time began,
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel heart of man.

"And thus, among the untaught poor,
Great deeds and feelings find a home,
That cast in shadow all the golden lore
Of classic Greece and Rome."¹

Such an ever-deepening confidence that, this being so, Man may yet rise to the level of his true destiny is leading us all slowly but surely to look beyond the veil for the consummation in many instances apparently not reached here. Accordingly, since we are Christians, with the fond, wistful glance that we are now daring to cast into the Great Unknown on the other side of the tomb, is returning, as a very instinct, the desire to associate our public worship with the memory of the comrades in arms, who, marching in the van of the one vast army of GOD'S Elect, have already wheeled round a bend, which we have not yet reached, of the road that leads to Eternity, and are, therefore, for the moment, out of the sight of our eyes.

¹ J. R. Lowell.

Nor will this novel theory of the limitation of prayers for the dead to men's private devotions in practice hold good all along the line. So it has actually happened that, Acts of Uniformity notwithstanding, on certain occasions when the heart of England has been stirred to its depths, direct prayers *have* been offered once more as of old, even in the Sanctuaries of the Church "by law established" for the repose or final acceptance before GOD of the souls of some, whose deaths have constituted unwontedly affecting episodes in the nation's history. Thus, for instance, on Feb. 5th, 1896, at Whippingham Church, took place the funeral of the late Prince Henry of Battenberg. In the course of this ceremony, after the Lesson, came the following Anthem, culled from the Liturgy of S. Chrysostom, the melody to which it was sung being old Russian plain-song.

"Give rest, O CHRIST, to Thy servant with Thy Saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Thou only art immortal, the Creator and Maker of man; but we are mortal, formed of the earth, and unto dust shall we return.

For so didst Thou ordain, when Thou createdst me, saying, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return!'

All we go down to the dust, and, weeping o'er the tomb, we make our song, 'Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!'

Give rest, O LORD, to Thy servant with Thy Saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting."

If, mere justice will inevitably demand in a free country, Royal mourners may be permitted to chant a *Requiem* at the burial of their dead, why not their subjects also, whose hearts bleed beside the open graves of their beloved with the self-same agony of desolation, that has

wrung in turn the heart of a widowed Princess, and a more than widowed Queen? For sorrow, surely, is the one experience common to all humanity, down all the way from prince to pauper. In the presence of sorrow, that very sacrament of brotherhood and sisterhood, whatever consolation is accorded to the ruler may not in equity be refused to the ruled.

Then again, in quite recent times, the country, aye, also the Empire to its farthest limits, have been moved, as they have seldom, if ever, been moved before, on behalf of the thousands upon thousands of their gallant sons going forth, at the peril of their lives, to do battle in South Africa, in the sacred cause, it may well be believed, of justice between man and man. In the course of the conflict many and many a precious life has been freely yielded up at duty's call, many and many a home has been bereaved, many a wife has been widowed, many a child orphaned. What then? Go and tell men that they must confine their intercessions on behalf of their slain to their private devotions? No, assuredly not. It has ascended, in a storm of pathos, to the skies, from rustic Chapel and vast metropolitan Cathedral, the litany of a nation's prayer for the souls of those who sleep their last long, glorious sleep across league after league of tumbling ocean :—

“For all those who have fallen in the true faith of Thy Holy Name—

That they with us may enter into
the rest, which Thou hast prepared
for them who believe in thee;

Hear us, good LORD.”

Well, and what has been the result to-day? Of course, there has been a fierce onslaught made upon those responsible for the issue of the very safe and

strictly limited formulary of intercession on behalf of our departed heroes, which we have all been permitted to adopt in our Churches "by authority." And by whom has the objection been lodged? By the People of England? No, of course not; though generally on such occasions there is a quantity of loose talk about the nation being alarmed, and so forth. No, the opposition has emanated from a narrow minority, who would veto the utterance of a syllable of prayer, however guarded, in the cause of the souls of the dead. Now, then, what answer has the Church of England made officially to her critics? Here is the reply of the highest ecclesiastical authority in the land to the objection of those objectors. I venture to italicise the words in the Archbishop's ¹ letter, which seem to call for remark.

"We know why prayers for the dead were discontinued and discouraged at the time of the Reformation. *They were bound up in the minds of the people with the Romish doctrine of Purgatory and Pardons, and this doctrine had led to such scandalous abuses, e.g., the sale of Indulgences*, that the authorities were obliged to use very strong measures in dealing with it. . . . It would have been easy to forbid such prayers altogether by putting in the words 'Prayers for the Dead' before the word 'Purgatory' in Article XXII. *But this the Church stopped short of doing. . . . The constant use of such a prayer in the ordinary worship* would, I think, be likely in course of time gradually to modify the teaching of the Church in ways that would not be wise. But this is *a special and exceptional occasion*. There are hundreds of *sorrowing*

¹ Archbishop of Canterbury's reply to Memorial from the National Protestant Church Union, dated Lambeth Palace, March 19th, 1900.

souls grieving over the sudden loss of friends and relations dearly loved. . . . They have been praying for them daily, and pouring out their affection in their prayers. They know (it is common knowledge now) that prayers for the dead are not forbidden by the law of the Church of England. They ask whether some form of prayer cannot be framed, which will allow them to express their feelings. . . . Moreover, the form is a national form. It is right that on such an occasion, when the whole of England is invited to unite in prayer to GOD for His blessing on the national action, provision should be made, as far as possible, for every variety of feeling that exists within the law of the National Church, and that there should not be even the appearance of a desire to narrow the breadth and comprehensiveness of her tolerance."

Again, we repeat that it did one's heart good to have an Archbishop of to-day defending prayers for the dead, not in this case merely in private, but also in public on a certain occasion. But though it would fairly seem almost an impertinence, if not an irreverence, for any plain Parochus even to appear to question the judgment of a Primate—especially a Primate whose least and lightest word merits every sane man's best consideration—still, in fear and trembling it may well be, one is bound to ask, since the Archbishop has been pleased to state his reasons, whether the response that has been given by His Grace, can be thought to have satisfied the minds of thousands upon thousands of Englishmen, whether laity or clerics, whether Anglicans or Nonconformists. In fact, we may go further, and enquire whether it has succeeded in setting at rest the perturbations of the malcontents themselves, to whom it was primarily addressed.

For, first, let it be noted that it is more than once reiterated that prayers for the dead are not illegal in the Church of England. We have seen that the Reformers deliberately, of set purpose, expunged from the catalogue of censured beliefs "prayer for the departed." But, after all, is it a strong position, in the face of Christendom, this *merely negative* position of the English Church? Nay, more, is it a position that, in practice, can be consistently maintained under *all* circumstances? No, confessedly and in fact, upon any "special and exceptional occasion" it is perforce abandoned as untenable.

Secondly, we are reminded that prayers for the dead—at any rate *direct* prayers for the dead—were excluded from the Common Prayer Book on account of the existence at one period of certain admitted scandals—admitted even by the Council of Trent—and gross superstitions. "*At that time*" (the time of the Reformation), Dr. Temple remarked, in his speech in the House of Lords on March 9th of this year, when challenged on the subject by certain Peers, "*it was very difficult to draw any line*, and the Church took the course of striking out all prayers that could possibly be abused, without any reference to the question whether or not they would be abused." But surely the circumstances of "*that time*" are not the circumstances of to-day. The Church of Rome herself to-day could not maintain in its entirety the system against which so righteous a protest was made at "*that time*." Certainly amongst the cold-blooded, matter-of-fact Englishmen of our own enlightened age, the glaring abuses of "*that time*" would not be tolerated for an hour. In the Article headed "The Communion of the Dead" in *The*

Christian World of April 5th last, to which reference has already been made, the following words occur in addition to those already cited. "This last question (as to whether we may pray for the dead) is before Protestant England to-day with fresh urgency *and under new conditions.*" Once more. "When questions, agitated by our forefathers, come up again for review, it is discovered that *the old fight cannot be repeated, and that all the conditions have changed.*" This witness is true. *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.* Because "at that time" the Truth was disfigured by the gradual accretion thereto of "dangerous deceits," impossible of acceptance nowadays, are we to be permanently deprived of the undoubtedly Primitive, and eminently consolatory custom of prayers for our dear dead? If so, then a truce to all our self-congratulations on the score of our *fin de siècle* progress, especially in the region of intellect! Just look for a moment how the matter appeared to a Prelate of the Anglican Obedience, whose life must have been passed within sight of "the Reformation Settlement." "Would to GOD," exclaims William Forbes,¹ a Scotch Bishop, who died in 1634, "that the Church of England, which certainly in other respects deserves a singular praise on account of the great moderation she has shewn in many other things, perchance not of equal moment, had in this matter (i.e., prayer for the dead) and in a few others, rather conformed herself to the most ancient custom of the Universal Church, than, on account of the errors and abuses which, little by little, had crept in afterwards, absolutely to have rejected and entirely to have abolished it, to the great scandal of almost all

¹ "*Considerationes modestae et pacificae controversiarum de Justificatione, Purgatorio, &c.*" *Of Purgatory.* Bk. I., ch. 3.

other Christians." Amen, say I, for my part. But as one who has lived to witness the dire results of the mistake then made by the Church of this country that confront us some three centuries after the event, I would venture to add, "To the great scandal," not only "of almost all *other* Christians," but also of multitudes of Christians *within her own fold*, who, in the absence of a hint from the Prayer Book that a single cry for mercy or restoration need be uttered on behalf of the dead, have inherited the bad tradition, so perilous to souls, that the decease of practically *every* man or woman who departs this life, however faulty, constitutes the triumphal entry of one more absolute Saint upon the immediate enjoyment of the Beatific Vision,—a theory which leads to the conclusion, that the Judgment is superfluous.

Thirdly, let us observe the somewhat unfamiliar justification by the Primate of prayers for the dead upon a "special and exceptional occasion." Such prayer apparently is not offered on behalf of the soldiers of their Queen, who die,

"Cut off even in the blossom of their sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneal'd;
No reckoning made, but sent to their account
With all their imperfections on their head."

No, it is offered for the personal consolation of "hundreds of sorrowing souls grieving over the sudden loss of friends and relations dearly loved. . . . They have been praying for them daily, and pouring out their affection in their prayers." But is it really the case, that prayer—indeed the purest, because most disinterested, prayer of which I am capable, *intercessory* prayer—that *that* prayer of all prayers is to be regarded by me as a means of comfort to *me*, who pray, a benefit to *myself*, and not a

service to my neighbour? One has always hitherto been led to believe, that this is something like the description of Christian prayer :

“ Prayer was not meant for luxury,
Or selfish pastime sweet ;
It is the prostrate creature's place
At his Creator's feet.”

Unselfishness, self-oblivion has certainly up to this time seemed to some of us the inspiration, the very instinct of every one who kneels him down to plead with Heaven for his beloved. Dare we, for instance, read into the fervent ejaculation of a Paul for his dead friend Onesiphorus, “The LORD grant unto *him* to find mercy of the LORD in that day,” even the suspicion of a selfish intention? An Augustine, at his mother's obsequies, shed never a tear for himself, for his own loss, he tells us, “even in those prayers, when the Sacrifice of our Redemption was offered on *her*”—not his own—“behalf.” No, in the past, at any rate, this has been regarded by some of us as the rule of discipline for such as pray :

“ Of this thing be careful—here give heed,
Since this and not thy pleasure is the end
Of all thy Prayer—this question often ask—
Does it more holy *self-denial* breed ? ”

Next, look whither this argument for prayers for the dead, upon a “special and exceptional occasion,” on the score of the consolation of the mourners, will conduct us. For instance, coincidently with the war in South Africa, there prevailed during last winter in my own little parish an epidemic of diphtheria amongst the children of all ages. I had to officiate both in the houses of mourning, and at the funeral itself, of most

of the little victims of this very scourge of GOD. In one instance, the child was an only child, and the parents' agony of sorrow was such as I have seldom witnessed, and certainly do not desire to witness again. Now why, in such an instance, are the bereaved to be refused a consolation freely granted to a neighbour, it may be, in the very next block of buildings, whose grief could hardly be more excessive, and who has at least the comfort of knowing that his or her beloved has fallen, amid a nation's tears, covered with the glory of a soldier's and a hero's death? Who is going to weigh human sufferings in the presence of death in the balances, and decide whether, in this instance or that, the loss incurred is severe enough to demand, as an exceptional privilege, the relief of permission to intercede on behalf of the departed? No, we believe that *the heart* of England would repudiate, as an intolerable wrong, any such invidious distinctions between mourners and mourners. Should not a Church, which is indeed a Mother to *all* her children without respect of persons, rather whisper something like this in the ear of every afflicted son or daughter within her bosom?

“ ‘ Each great bereavement, shaking the foundations of thy life,’

whether thou be prince or peasant, is my care without a suspicion of partiality, and I will charge my Priests to minister to all alike, whatever consolations Religion is capable of offering, in unstinted bounty.” If, in one instance, sorrow, on account of its comparatively wide extent, be here and to-day so big a fact as to constitute a ground for exemption from the rigours of an Act of Uniformity, then, surely, there and to-morrow, in another instance, sorrow, which is in fact co-terminous

with humanity itself, will discover a similar justification for a like concession.

But, fourthly—and in conclusion of our whole Essay—the Primate calls attention to the fact that “the form is a *national* form.” There is the usual appeal to the circumstance, that our Church claims to be a “*National*” Church; and here is just the point that most forcibly, nay with an insistence that cannot be gainsaid, strikes the present writer in his character of a plain Parochus. This question for him at once arises: *If the Church of England be in very deed a National Church, what service is she to-day rendering to the Nation—the whole Nation, that is, not a fraction of it?* Of course we know by this time—the fact is so often dinned in our ears—that the English Church is the National Church—*on paper*. We are getting accustomed almost to the eternal appeal, not to the standards of faith, discipline, and ritual, of CHRIST’S Holy Catholic Church throughout the world, but to the local traditions of the Church of England, the National¹ Church of one pre-eminently

¹ To the present writer there is a certain amount of difficulty in accepting enthusiastically the latest of British *'isms*, namely, *Nationalism* in religion. At a clerical gathering I myself recently attended, it was seriously and conscientiously contended by more than one speaker, that Christian Dogma, in our enlightened age, must be so modified as eventually to make it easy for *all* citizens of the English Commonwealth to become members also of the English Church! Is this, or is it not, the logical outcome of the theory very prevalent in this country, that Englishmen, being spiritually and ecclesiastically, as well as materially and politically, the special favourites of a pro-British Heaven, possess a practically irreformable Faith of their own, patented to suit their own peculiar susceptibilities, such susceptibilities finding expression, from time to time, in the votes of fluctuating Parliamentary majorities? It is, of course, granted that, in the New Testament, the only sense in which the Plural form “Churches” was admissible, is the sense of *local* branches, or *local* groups of

enlightened people. But, despite a good deal of tall talk about the "National" Church, the Nation—or at least the great mass of the Nation—stand, for practical purposes, outside of the ministrations of the so-called "National" Church. The fact can hardly be disputed. God forbid that we, least of all, should regard as irreligious, much less outside the pale of salvation, the millions upon millions of Englishmen, who do not frequent places of worship. Still, it will hardly be seriously contended that habitual non-attendance at Church and habitual non-reception of the Sacraments constitute no grave perils to the souls of men. Now

branches, of the One Church Universal, e.g., "*The Churches of Galatia*." (1 Cor. xvi. i.) There existed, then, from the beginning, "Churches" consisting of persons, who were natives of, or resident in, particular cities or districts. It would not, then, appear inconceivable, that, *as regards matters purely indifferent*, some licence might be conceded to racial idiosyncrasies. But the insistence, in season and out of season, upon the principle of Nationalism, the perpetual resort to the authority of Anglicanism, as distinct from Catholicism, in the minds of some of us, really looks like an unconscious reaction in the direction of Judaism. For Judaism was essentially *the* National Religion of one elect and privileged people; and, therefore, the appeal of God to the Jews is consistently couched in such language as "Yet now hear, O Jacob, My servant: and Israel, whom I have chosen." (*Isaiah* xlv. i.) But, surely, with the advent of Christianity, the position became the very reverse of this; the National idea gave place to the Cosmopolitan ideal: Nationalism broadened out into Catholicism. Surely here, according to S. Paul, you have the very Magna Charta of Christendom: "There is neither Jew nor Greek,"—may we not dare add, "There is neither Englishman, nor Frenchman, nor American"?—"there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS. And if ye be CHRIST's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (*Gal.* iii. 28.) It would seem, moreover, to the present writer specially incumbent upon Englishmen, as citizens of a world-wide Empire, rather to discourage, than unduly emphasize, the theory of Nationalism in Religion; rather to be willing to

glance for a moment at the following statistics, which I cull quite at random from the Correspondence Columns of an old issue of *The Guardian* newspaper. But first let this be premised. Of course I do not for one instant single out the town in question as being in a worse condition spiritually, than various other towns, and villages too, for that matter. Nor do I doubt but that much improvement has been effected, and is being effected, since the date of the Census, to which reference is made by the writer. I merely cite the instance adduced by the correspondent of *The Guardian*¹ as a specimen of what would probably be found to be very much like the condition of things even to-day in many parts of the country, not exclusively in Lancashire.

surrender, than rigidly enforce, the differences, theological or liturgical, which, for centuries back, have placed the English Church, as regards the rest of Catholic Christendom, in an unenviable position of dangerous isolation. With respect to the subject immediately before us, it is at least a question whether it lay within the competence of the English Church to break away from an undoubtedly Primitive and universal tradition of Christendom, by peremptorily, with a stroke of the pen, eliminating from her Divine Liturgy all direct intercession for the departed.

With regard to the now generally exaggerated importance assigned to mere Anglicanism, the following remarks in *The Church Times* of Oct. 12th, 1900, are, perhaps, worth emphasizing here:—"A very admirable letter appeared in Tuesday's *Times* on some important discrepancies between the Sealed Book of 1662 and the Prayer Book as now printed. In the Title-page, as in that of the 1549 Book, though not in that of intermediate Editions, a contrast is drawn between the Church and the Church of England, and that contrast is emphasized in the Sealed Book by printing the word 'Church' in old English capitals, and 'Church of England' in the ordinary black letters. In like manner, in the Ornaments' Rubric we have a distinction between the Church and the Church of England, which clearly shows the intention of the Compilers to make the latter subsidiary to the former."

¹ See "Correspondence." *The Guardian*, Feb. 12th, 1896.

"A Census of persons attending Evening Service at all the places of worship in Bolton was taken on Sunday, December 22nd. The population was estimated at 125,000, and only 14,214 persons, or 11'37 per cent. were registered as attending. Surely the fact that only one person in every eight or nine was found at public worship is a terrible reproach to our common Christianity. . . . But look at the position our own Church occupied. The Church of England attracted 4,825 out of the total of 14,214, or 34 per cent. only. And this is the National Church of the land!" Now what do statistics like the above mean? They mean that the Church has little or no hold upon the bulk of what we familiarly, and, I fancy, uncharitably style "the *lapsed* masses." Nearly every honest Parochus, be he who he may, must perforce regretfully admit, that, with all his best endeavours, the circle of his pastoral influence is nothing like co-extensive with the total population of his cure. If, then, the Church apparently cannot reach, and effectually shepherd the vast majority of the people of England, yet, nevertheless, continues to claim to be in fact the "National" Church, some of us feel more strongly year by year, that she ought at any rate to be interceding—this is the least she can do—with GOD, week in and week out, on behalf of the souls, to whom she is unable ordinarily to minister in holy things. The author remembers to have seen somewhere a somewhat fanciful cartoon purporting to pourtray representatives of the various professions and callings of Englishmen, with accompanying statements of the special office of each on behalf of the Nation. Under an effigy of a clergyman in his surplice was inscribed the legend, "*I pray for all!*" Here, at any rate, is a ministry, the scope

of which is actually commensurate with the needs of the entire Nation, without one exception.

Yet, with all the revived activities and re-awakened enthusiasms of modern times within the bosom of the English Church our Mother, one is almost afraid that she has not up to the present moment risen to a very general recognition of her obligation to perform her most solemn engagement of all to the nation; the engagement, that is to say, to intercede with GOD from year's end to year's end, on behalf of the souls of men, whom she can assist in no other way. Coincidentally with the setting up of "the abomination that maketh desolate," the prophet Daniel thrice declares that "the daily sacrifice was taken away." (*Dan.* viii. 11; xi. 31; xii. 11.) "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are *the Lord's remembrancers*, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (*Is.* lxii. 6-8.) Here was an ideal for the Jewish Church to aim at. And surely, we Christians, in the Holy Eucharist, have a very special rite of 'remembrancing the LORD.' May not, I would ask, the failure on the part of the watchmen of the English Church to cry mightily to GOD, week in and week out, on Monday and Tuesday as well as on Sunday, have been, as much as the abatement of practical energy, the cause of the lapse of the Nation as a whole either into Sectarianism, or—what is infinitely worse—into Indifferentism or 'Nothingarianism?' Just think of this one fact, in view of the brag and bluster prevalent nowadays as to the immense advance that has been made in our generation ecclesiastically. A Rubric at the end of the Office of Holy Communion reads, "And

in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colleges, *where there are many Priests and Deacons*, they shall all receive the Communion with the Priest *every Sunday at the least.*" In the teeth of this regulation, in how many—or rather, in how few—of our Cathedrals and larger Churches served by large staffs of clergy have we as yet got beyond *the bare minimum* requirement of a weekly Eucharist? The present writer has in his mind a network of large centres of population in his own immediate neighbourhood, in which *from no Altar whatever* is offered the Daily Sacrifice of 'remembrancing the LORD.' Even to this day—with notable exceptions, for which we thank GOD and take courage—the empty, rarely filled naves and aisles and dismantled chapels of some of our vast Cathedrals and Minsters strike a chill of almost despair into one's heart, as one traverses feet upon feet of void, unfurnished space, trodden only by the casual feet of unawed, chattering sightseers. Even to-day the lamentation of Isaac Williams' *Ichabod* is in some quarters by no means out of date.

" Without—the world's unceasing noises rise,
 Turmoil, disquietude, and busy fears.
 Within—there are the sounds of other years,
 Thoughts full of Prayer, and solemn harmonies,
 Which imitate on earth the peaceful skies,
 And canonized Regret, which backward bears
 Her longing aspect, moving thoughtful tears.
 Such blest abodes, in Heaven's all-pitying eyes,
 Might yet be eloquent for a nation's good;
 But where is now the kneeling multitude?
 The silver-tongued spruce verger passes by,
 Hurrying his group, the proud and curious eye
 Of connoisseur—the loiterer's sauntering mood:
 Sad picture of lost Faith and evil nigh!"¹

¹ From *The Cathedral. The Cloisters*, ix.

The question, in the humble opinion of the present writer, before the Church of England to-day, is not the question as to how heavily or how lightly the dead hand of an Act of Uniformity of the Seventeenth Century is to press upon the living, breathing organization of the Body of CHRIST upon the threshold of the Twentieth Century, but it is the question of the Mission of a National Church to the millions upon millions of souls to whom she is accredited to minister ; but who, in point of fact, place themselves outside the range of her operations. "And Aaron took as Moses spake, and ran into the midst of the assembly ; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people : and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. *And he stood between the dead and the living ;* and the plague was stayed." (*Numb.* xvi. 47, 48.) This, it appears to some of us, constitutes the truest benefit England's Church can confer upon England as a whole, to stand, namely, day by day between the dead and the living, the Incense of Prayer ascending on the Nation's behalf from each and every Sanctuary in the land.

And such perpetual intercession on the part of the English Church must surely once more include prayer for the dead as for the living—prayer for many and many a soul, to whom on earth she has never had a fair opportunity of ministering. Every day that dawns would seem to some of us 'a special and exceptional occasion,' since every day, that dawns upon England, dawns upon a National Church, which is not the Church of the Nation, a National Church, within whose reach now lies no other office of Christian charity in the interests of vast masses of the Nation save that supremest act of charity, the act of unwearied supplication

for their unshepherded souls. We, most of us, have no fancy for the occurrence of a very revolution so big with fate as the revolution, which would probably be entailed upon the country by the passage of an Act of Parliament disestablishing and, therefore, disendowing the Church of England. But, if such a revolution be really the only available route to the restoration to English Churchmen of the right to breathe a litany for the souls that pass away, then I, for my own part, would meet that revolution with the fortitude begotten of a sense of obligation to the Brotherhood.

If I, a plain Parochus, like many another better man than myself, as the weeks, months, and years of my ministry on earth pass all too speedily over my head, am bound to confess day by day more sorrowfully,

“How feeble hath been all my soul’s essay
To aid one single man on all God’s earth,”

then I, for one, would pray, as the deepest prayer of my heart, in the sacred name of the Fatherland, that there may be soon restored to me the privilege all Catholic Christendom everywhere enjoys, and has enjoyed since Primitive times, the privilege, namely, of free licence to plead at the graveside, before the Altar I serve, but what S. Paul pleaded for his dead—call the ejaculation, as you like, a prayer or a pious aspiration—“The LORD grant unto him, unto her, to find mercy of the LORD in that day.” This duty—the only duty within my power in the cause of millions upon millions of my Nation, aye, and beyond my Nation—surely I may hope, in GOD’S own good time, to be permitted to fulfil, now that the wide, generous heart of England, the tyranny of a pitiless Calvinism overpast, is expanding to realize, that it is indeed the

fact of facts, that the CHRIST of GOD died to save a majority, not a minority of Mankind, a World, and not a sect.

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding
abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us,
unto Him be glory
in the Church by CHRIST JESUS
throughout all ages,
world without end.
Amen.”



AD MISERICORDIAM.

"Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the House of my God, and for the Offices thereof."

Nehemiah xiii. 14.

"When they came to JESUS, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."—*S. Luke vii. 4, 5.*

It may be that the foregoing pages may catch the eye of some mourner for his Dead, fallen, perchance, gloriously in his country's quarrel, across league upon league of tumbling ocean,—some mourner, to whom his God has entrusted the Stewardship of Wealth. The same GOD, Who remembered Nehemiah for his work's sake, in the setting up again of the broken down Walls of Zion, the same JESUS, Who healed the Centurion's servant, "who was dear unto him," for his worthiness' sake, as the builder of a Place of Prayer for the Strangers, amongst whom he sojourned,—the same GOD, the same JESUS may grant that mourner his heart's desire, the consolation of his own grief, the repose of his darling's soul, if he too be the Second Founder of an incomplete, and the Repairer of a decayed, Sanctuary of that GOD and His CHRIST. The Author's own little Parish Church stands away on the bleak moorlands of Lancashire, out of the beat of the traffic of the feet of men. It is without Vestry; it is without Baptistry; it is *very* shabby: in stormy weather the very rain and snow have fallen upon the shoulders of its Priest, when preaching in its Pulpit and celebrating at its Altar. The few and scattered Church-folk of the parish have spent themselves and their small resources, in enlarging their Schools at a very large cost: in their need they have no rich fellow-parishioners to whom to appeal for help towards the restoration of their Church to "the beauty of Holiness." Others, in more favoured neighbourhoods, are *so* rich in the glory and majesty of their Houses of Prayer—rich almost to luxury: we are *so* poor, even to lack of mere decency. If any such mourner for his dear Dead, for that, in the pages of this little Essay, he has found comfort in his heart-ache of bereavement, assurance of Hope for his Beloved in the Beyond, be moved to give willingly of his substance towards the completion and repair of the Church, in which the Author unworthily ministers the Word and Sacraments of God, with perpetual remembrance before the Altar of the souls that pass away, then: "*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis: sed Nomini Tuo da gloriam.*"

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